What Digital Camera

November 2005 Issue No.102 £4.20 (UK)

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26 PAGES OF TECHNIQUE

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KonicaMinolta Z6
Nikon Coolpix 5900
Panasonic Lumix LX1
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Getting the best from a compact

QUALITY QUEST
Hot editing tips

BIG TEST

Panasonic FZ30

The Superzoom that thinks it's an SLR

David Leeson
Pulitzer-Prize winning portfolio

Reader Gallery
Your inspirational images

Photoshop
Make a holiday joiner

WIN!
SanDisk memory cards and Energizer batteries up for grabs

AOL Keyword: What Digital Camera

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WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA

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WELCOME...

...to our November issue. Once again we've tested the latest new digital cameras to within an inch of their lives to bring you our definitive verdicts on them. This month our line-up includes two exciting models from Panasonic – a company which, in just a couple of years, has come from nowhere to take a significant slice of the digital camera pie.

For software fans, two of the most popular editing packages, Adobe Elements and Corel Paint Shop Pro, have just been upgraded, and we've tested them both. Find out what we think on pages 44 and 46. With the clocks going back, and the nights getting darker, you might need to consider investing in a flashgun, but don't buy before reading our group test on page 57. And if you're looking for something to do to occupy those gloomy evenings, how about uploading your photos to one of the many photo-sharing websites? We've looked at a selection of them on page 53.

Finally, with the situation in Iraq still dominating the news, US photojournalist David Leeson has risked his life to tell the human story behind the headlines. His bravery has won him the Pulitzer Prize, and we're proud to be able to show you a selection of those images this month. Whatever your views of the rights and wrongs of the war, you cannot fail to be moved by Leeson's depiction of the plight of those caught up on both sides of the conflict. See you next month.

Nigel Atherton
nigel_atherton@ipcmedia.com

November *Contents*

COVER feature

20 Panasonic Lumix FZ30
Panasonic's follow-up to the impressive FZ20 is closer to an SLR, finds Jamie Harrison

NEW EQUIPMENT

camera tests

26 Konica Minolta Dimage Z6
Hannah Bouckley tests the latest Dimage megazoom

28 Nikon Coolpix 5900
Joël Lacey tests this D-Lightful Coolpix compact model

32 Panasonic Lumix LX1
The world's first true widescreen-format CCD gets Joël Lacey's attention

34 HP Photosmart R817
A doddle to use, thanks to HP's Real Life Technologies

37 Konica Minolta Dimage X1
The X1 is sleek, shiny and boasts 8MP, finds Joël Lacey

38 Olympus Camedia FE-5500
Jamie Harrison tests the Camedia FE-5500, a 5MP camera with a twist

41 Samsung Digimax i5
The i5 comes under Hannah Bouckley's scrutiny

42 Kodak EasyShare V530
We look at this sleek 5MP, £250 contender

HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

accessories

44 Adobe Photoshop Elements 4
The new version is ace!

46 Corel PaintShop Pro X
We test Version X

48 Kodak Pro 1400
We test the A4 printer

50 Wacom Cintiq 21UX
Interactive pen display

57 Flashguns Group test
Which flashguns are best?

53 Photo-sharing Websites
We check out six options for sharing pics

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA on sale from 7TH OCTOBER 2005
November 2005 Issue No. 102

TECHNIQUE
shooting

62 David Leeson
How the war photojournalist copes with shooting under fire with his Canon DSLRs

68 Shooting with a compact
John Freeman has some tips

70 Work Smart Quality editing
Hot editing tips

72 Photoshop Project Holiday Joiner
Create a great record of your holiday!

76 Photoshop Challenge
Have fun and learn new features!

UPLOADED
your pictures

82 Readers' Gallery
Four pages of superb images

87 Evening Class
Martin Evening assesses more of your photographs

92 Help File
Four pages of Q and As

90 Photographer of the Year
Winners of Leisure – and vote for the overall winner

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...at a glance

THIS ISSUE

Letters Your Views 09
News Monitor 12
Next Month 17
Spotlight Inspiration 18
Panasonic Lumix FZ30 20
Konica Minolta Z6 26
Nikon Coolpix 5900 28
Panasonic Lumix LX1 32
HP Photosmart R817 34
Konica Minolta X1 37
Olympus FE-5500 38
Samsung Digimax i5 41
Kodak V530 42
Photoshop Elements 4.0 44
Paint Shop Pro X 46
Kodak 1400 Pro printer 48
Wacom Cintiq 21UX 50
WIN! Energizer batteries 50
Test Reprints 41
Group Test Photo-share sites 53
Round-Up Flashguns 57
Pro File David Leeson 62
WIN! SanDisk memory cards 66
John Freeman Compact skills 68
Work Smart Pro Editing 70
Photoshop Holiday Joiner 72
Photoshop Challenge 76
Subscription Special Offer 80
Reader Gallery 82
Evening Class 87
POTY Round 5 Leisure winners 90
Help File 92
Buying Guide 134
Home Study Course 144
Parting Shot 146

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WDC Letters

Something to say? Then drop us a line

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No Tricks, Please

Alan Aitchison

I'm not impressed by surreal or trick pictures that are only done to shock or surprise the viewer. Once the novelty has worn off, they date very quickly and are bettered with each advance in Photoshop. I like landscapes, and don't care whether they're of rolling countryside or a coking plant belching out clouds of smoke. Good landscapes will have the same impact in years to come as they do now.

With digital it's easier than ever to replace a boring sky with one full of cotton wool clouds, or remove overflowing rubbish bins that detract from the picture. We can even cut-and-paste an interesting subject from one picture to another. 'Reality' sometimes requires a helping hand.

I suppose the main difference between the trick photographer and the landscaper is that the first want you to see how clever they are at manipulating images. Yet the landscaper, who may be just as skilled in Photoshop, aims to present a picture that appears untouched and real. Now that's what I call a trick.

Above: 'Oi, stop this nonsense!' Alan Aitchison is not impressed with Photoshop trickery like this

Elemental Error

Mike Houghton

I've been a regular reader of WDC since I bought my first digital camera in Feb 2003. The 100th issue was particularly interesting. Fascinating to see how things have changed in just 8 years. Thank you. I was most interested by the results of the editing software survey on page 10. As an Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0 user myself, I was encouraged to see that just over a quarter of those surveyed use Photoshop Elements rather than Photoshop. But, if that is so, should not there be more support for those users in your WDC tutorials and CD-ROMs? Until now I'd assumed that I must be one of the few amateurs among your readers who don't use Photoshop, since the emphasis appears to be almost exclusively on Photoshop. As a Photoshop Elements user I also need help please.

WDC: Glad you liked the 100th issue Mike. As the survey shows, more readers use Photoshop than all other software put together which is why we focus mostly on that. But Elements is basically Photoshop Lite and 90% of what you can do in Photoshop can also be done in Elements. There are a few differences in the names and locations of some functions but we usually mention

Letter of the month

this month's **STAR** prize

Those were the days

Brian Barratt

Your magazine just gets better and better, but you'll have to work very hard to beat your 100th issue (September). The Live8 feature was inspiring, the 100 tips were useful, and your pick of your 100 best products was very interesting, but the piece de resistance was your look back at the last eight years since WDC has been published. It brought back a lot of memories and made me laugh out loud on more than one occasion. Not only do I recall being excited about some of the tat you showed, I even bought some of it (Kodak DC210, anyone?)

If only I could have back the money I've spent over the years on digital cameras. Why, I'd probably go out and buy a Canon EOS 1DS. I can't complain, though. I've had a lot of fun. But I wonder what we'll think of the current crop of digicams in eight years' time?

WDC: *Would anyone out there like to speculate the price and specification of a typical entry-level DSLR in 2013? We'll award a prize for the most accurate prediction – in our Xmas 2013 issue!*

SoundByte

Nigel Atherton confesses to a shameful secret. But don't tell anyone, will you?

I've got a confession to make which, given my job, is a little embarrassing. I'm not sure that I should tell you, but I will, as long as you promise to keep it to yourself.

A couple of weeks ago my wife went to visit a friend she hadn't seen for a few years, and the friend asked Sharron to bring along a few recent photos of our two children.

I'll dig some out, I said, and thought no more about it until a couple of days before the visit, when Sharron asked, 'Where are those pictures?'

Then it hit me. 'They're, err, on my Mac.'

'Hmm,' came the unimpressed reply. 'Well I'm hardly going to lug your laptop up there, am I? Just give me some different pictures, anything will do,' she pleaded in an exasperated tone.

Then the awful truth came out. Although I've taken well over 500 pictures of the children this year, I haven't actually printed any shots of them since last Christmas. Whoops.

'I'll tell you what,' I offered. 'I'll go and print some now.' I disappeared into the spare room and a few minutes later the sound of cursing drifted into the living room. 'Out of Magenta ink' my printer helpfully informed me. Oh yes, I remember now. It said that last time I tried to print something.

'Not to worry,' I said. 'I'll go out and get a new cartridge tomorrow.' True to my word, the next day I returned from the shops with a new Magenta ink cartridge (I would have bought a complete extra set, but couldn't spare the required £50), installed it, and hit 'Print' again, only to discover that I'd misread the message, and it wasn't the Magenta cartridge that was out, it was the Photo Magenta. Bugger.

To cut a long story short, I did eventually manage to make a few prints, and the day was saved. But I've learned my lesson. I'm now in the process of sorting and preparing about 100 pictures to upload to my online lab to get printed forthwith. Two copies of each.

My sorry experience bears out the statistics I saw the other day which shows that, even though we take more pictures than ever, we rarely print them. No wonder labs are worried. The combination of apathy and home printing means they're turning over only a fraction of what they were in the peak days of film (in 2000-2001). But even if you add the vast and growing home printer market, the percentage of images that ever see paper is in single figures and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

The labs' challenge is to persuade me (actually remind is more the word) to print those memories. Take them out of their virtual existence on the hard disc and make them real. Share them with others. Stick them on the wall, put them on the mantlepiece, file them in a photo album.

So how about you? It's your turn to confess your sins: when was the last time you printed your precious photos

Whodunnit?

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what these are somewhere within the tutorial, so Elements users can usually follow them without difficulty. Having said that, we will be doing more Elements-based tutorials in future.

Empty promise

Mark Fleming

I bought WDC to help me in the process of parting with my hard-earned cash and decided on the Canon 350D. In WDC it was some £65.00 cheaper than my local dealer, who offer a 'price promise'. I went there armed with my plastic and your magazine, and hey presto I have a new baby! Or do I? I was advised by the sales assistant that it wouldn't be possible to confirm the discount on the spot but it wouldn't be a problem to price match as I had the advert and the store was within the specified radius that the company uses for the price match qualification.

My instructions were simple: ring tomorrow and we can authorise the discount with head office. But this was never to materialise, as they class the rival shop as 'Mail order', even though they have a shop nearby where I can buy the camera from. I'm now left with two options, take a £25.00 discount or return the camera!

So all you buyers, beware of the small print, it's not always as good as it looks. I can't help but think how much business my dealer is losing by pricing itself out of the market. I've always bought my kit there in the past but I'll be looking elsewhere in future.

LCD vs EVF

Eric Lewtas

Like many people I have perfect distance vision but need glasses for close-up work. For this reason I deplore the trend towards doing away with optical viewfinders in compact cameras and relying solely on a LCD. No matter how big or bright they are, they still look blurred and fuzzy to my unaided vision. By the time I've fumbled around for my spectacles the 'decisive moment' has long gone.

I find electronic viewfinders to be ideal as they clear to the naked eye. Not only can I see a sharp image but I can also read the menus clearly, something I am not able to do using an LCD. True, electronic viewfinders are not perfect but they are a lot better than they were a few years ago and are improving all the time.

Empty promise

Michael Vale

I'm a bit miffed at companies that advertise digital cameras in WDC and place an email address to contact them, only to ignore any requests for availability and advice with regards to purchasing a digital camera from them!

I've sent a couple of emails to companies regarding the new Fujifilm S9500, and I'm amazed by the lack of response I've got. Maybe trade is so good that they don't need to increase their customer base? Thanks for a good, informative magazine. I'm looking forward to the review on the Fuji S9500.

WDC: *A full test of the Fujifilm S9500 will appear in the next issue (December).*

Kyocera service

Frazer Allen, Alpha Digital Services

Last month (October) you published a letter from a reader who was disappointed by the service he received from Kyocera UK when his Yashica T4 became defective. While I don't have the full details of the complaint, I'd like to point out that this model was never imported into the UK but was produced for the US market. So although Kyocera UK should be able to repair it, they cannot be expected to have all the spare parts in stock. Also, since Yashica (unlike Contax) does not provide a world-wide warranty, a charge for any parts used would be necessary.

It may interest your readers to know that, following the withdrawal of Kyocera from the photographic market, Alpha Digital Services have now been appointed as the Authorised Repair centre for all Contax Yashica and Kyocera products. Alpha will offer an excellent service to all these brands for as long as spare parts are available.

The contact details are: Alpha Digital Services Ltd, 111 Loverock Road, Reading RG30 1DZ. Tel 01189 337000. Visit www.kyu.co.uk for details.

Web Forum Chat

Would you buy a second hand camera?

Posted by: Big Will
Board: Lounge

They say there's nothing as old as yesterday's news but in the photographic world it might be fair to say there's nothing as old as yesterday's digital camera. There must be heaps of old 1MP and 2MP cameras gathering dust.

The thing about 35mm is that it hasn't changed significantly for years and it matters little what camera you use, because similar results can be obtained across a wide spectrum of camera models (broadly speaking).

Digital is a different kettle of fish, as the camera specification can make a vast difference to the results. But is it all doom and gloom for older digital users? I suspect not: the saying 'there's many a good tune on an old fiddle' would seem to hold true as long as the 'fiddle' isn't too old!

There are older digital bargains to be had out there if you're prepared to look and can live with the 'stigma' of not holding the latest digital tackle in your hand! But would you buy one?

Submitting pictures to press/image agencies

Posted by: Daniel
Board: News

If you take digital, watermark them. There is software to do this, by watermarking the lower corners instead of across the image. You can also add the info in Photoshop in the File Info tab under copyright and URL.

Never send a file in its original state and size; reduce the size and, if you want, reduce the quality slightly (if your original is a JPEG), but not so much that it's going to deteriorate the image visibly.

I think it's always better to shoot in RAW and then convert to JPEG. You keep the high-quality RAW, and can send out a high-quality JPEG because they won't be able to reverse the JPEG to a higher-quality file. The RAW file will contain all the info of exposure and the JPEG copy you did in Photoshop etc will lose that info.

Include email and phone contacts, don't delete the email you sent, as an extra precautionary measure (to prove you sent the email to the agency/company).

Our survey said...

QUESTION: Which brand of camera do you use?

Canon	31.5%
Nikon	21.2%
Fujifilm	12.5%
Konica Minolta	8.4%
Olympus	5.9%
Sony	5.3%
Pentax	4.5%
Panasonic	4.4%
Kodak	2.7%
Casio	0.9%
HP	0.9%
Other	1.8%

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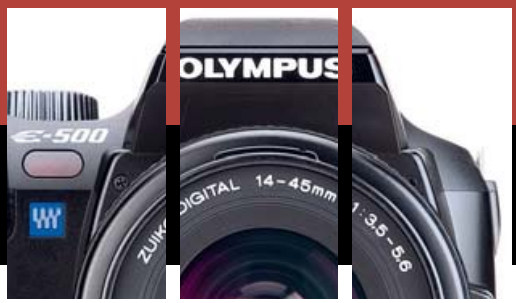

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CAMERA NEWS

CAMERA NEWS p12-13
SOFTWARE NEWS p14
PRINTER NEWS p16-17
ACCESSORY NEWS p13-16
BOOKS p18
WEBSITES p19

Olympus SLR Heads Line-up

Six compacts from Olympus join the E-500, a Four-Thirds DSLR

Featuring an 8MP full-frame transfer CCD, the E-500 is Olympus's third digital SLR built to the Four Thirds standard. Thanks to a radical redesign since the E-300, it is one of the most compact and lightweight DSLRs available.

Aimed at the consumer market, it features Automatic and 21 scene modes and full manual control. Shutter speeds range from 1/4000–60sec (8min bulb); ISO settings are 100-400 (expandable to 1600) and can be adjusted in 1/3 increments. The E-500 enables continuous JPEG shooting at 2.5fps until the card reaches maximum capacity (when a high-speed card is used).

Olympus's Supersonic Wave Filter vibrates at a rate of 35,000 vibrations a second every time the camera is activated, to remove dust from the sensor.

The E-500 incorporates a TTL Penta mirror optical viewfinder, while the 2.5in HyperCrystal LCD is composed of 215,250 pixels. Other features include: a noise filter, TruePic Turbo Processor, dual memory card slot for xD and CompactFlash cards, and 49-zone multi-pattern metering.

The E-500 is available on its own or in a selection of kits: the SE kit has a 35-90mm f/3.5-5.6 lens; the Standard Kit a 28-90mm f/3.5-5.6 lens and costs around £600; and the Double Zoom kit features a 28-90mm f/3.5-5.6 and a 80-300mm f/3.5-4.5 lens and costs around £650.

Compacts released start with the 5MP **SP-500UZ**. It has a 10x optical 38-380mm f/2.8-3.7 lens, and Shutter Priority, Aperture Priority, Program, Manual, Auto and 21 pre-set exposure modes. At £300, it enables JPEG and RAW shooting, has a 2.5in LCD and 201,000pixel electronic viewfinder. The 8MP **SP-350** and 7MP **SP-310** feature a 3x optical f/2.8-4.9 38-114mm lens and manual and automatic exposure controls. The SP-350 costs £310 and the £270 SP-310 is a Jessops exclusive.

A Dixons exclusive, the 6MP Olympus **FE-120** has a 3x optical zoom and 1.8in LCD. The 5MP **FE-100** costs £120 and 4MP **FE-110** £150, and both feature a 2.8x optical zoom.

Call 0800 072 0070 or log onto **www.olympus.co.uk** to find out more.

Ricoh launches GR Digital

Following on from the GR series of 35mm compacts it released in the 1990s, Ricoh has announced an 8MP digicam with a newly developed lens and 25mm deep body.

The **GR Digital** has a CCD with an effective resolution of 8.14MP. The newly developed f/2.4 fixed-focus lens is 38mm. Instead of being incorporated into the body, the optical viewfinder attaches onto the hotshoe for more accurate framing. Available now for £399.99 the GR Digital boasts full manual control, RAW and JPEG shooting, 1.5cm macro, selectable 3:2 aspect ratio, and 2.5in LCD.

Ricoh has also announced two 5MP compacts, the **R3** and **RR530**.

The slimline R3 features a 28-200mm lens, while Vibration Correction Function moves the CCD, countering movement to help produce sharp images. Retailing for £249.99 the R3 promises a fast shutter-release time of 0.09sec (0.007sec with focus lock), a 1.1sec start-up and 0.5sec shooting interval.

The RR530 includes a f/2.8-4.8 32-96mm lens, with 6cm macro capability. It retails for £129.99. Find out more at **www.ricohpmmc.com** or by calling 0208 261 4031.

Sony R1 Boasts 10MP

Featuring a 10.3MP CMOS sensor five times the size of that used in the 8MP DSC-F828, Sony claims the R1 offers an alternative to some digital SLRs with comparable picture quality.

Retailing at around £700, the 3:2 sensor of the **R1** measures 21.5mm x 14.4mm, with the pixels at 3888 x 2592.

The f.2.8-4.8 Carl Zeiss lens has a focal length of 24-120mm; it adopts a 'back focus' structure to reduce the effects of chromatic aberration by reducing the distance between lens and sensor. The LCD and viewfinder offer live viewing; the 2in LCD is located on top of the camera adopting an 'over head' approach. The swivel design allows photos to be taken from low and high angles.

Clear RAW NR reduces noise (even at high sensitivity), decreases power consumption and produces a faster signal transfer.

Sony has also announced the **Cybershot M2**. Featuring MPEG-4 movie recording and the ability to create slideshows with music using the supplied Picture Package software, it is the first Sony digicam to incorporate stereo sound. With a folded-path design, it has a 38-114mm Carl Zeiss lens and 2.5in LCD. Pocket Album enables 1100 images to be stored in VGA format using a separate memory.

The M2 will cost £399.99. Find out more at www.sony.co.uk

Water Baby

The Pentax Optio WPi is a waterproof 6MP compact with a 38-114mm 3x optical zoom. Featuring a slim body 22mm deep, JIS Class 8 waterproof performance enables it to be used for up to 30 minutes underwater to a depth of 1.5mm.

Other features include a 2in LCD screen composed of 115,000 pixels, Candlelight and Report mode (enabling the camera to attain a sensitivity of ISO 800) and tracking AF.

The **Optio S6** features a 6MP CCD, 3x optical zoom and 2.5in LCD. Sporting an aluminium-alloy exterior, at 19mm the S6 is 2mm slimmer than Pentax's conventional units, thanks to the Sliding Lens System, a thinner LCD and flat backside of the lens unit. The S6 offers 640x480 movie shooting at 30fps and 15 shooting modes.

The Pentax Optio WPi and S6 will both retail for under £300. See www.pentax.co.uk or call 01753 792792.

Nikon Duo With Wi-fi

The Coolpix P1 and P2 allow photos to be transferred directly from camera to computer, thanks to Wi-Fi LAN support. The 8MP P1 and the 5.1MP P2 both have a 36-126mm lens and 2.5in LCD.

They boast 16 scene modes (11 include Nikon's Advanced Scene Modes) plus Aperture Priority and seven movie modes. The **P1** costs £349 and the **P2** is £279.

The 6MP **Coolpix S3** has a 2.5in LCD, 35-105mm lens and 17 scene modes. It costs £299.

Available as Dixons exclusives, the **Coolpix L1** (silver) and **L101** (black) both feature 6.2MP, a 5x optical 38-190mm lens and 2.5in LCD. Retailing for £229 they feature Face-Priority AF and a Best Shot Selector.

Priced £329, the 6MP **Coolpix S4** has a 38-380mm lens and 2.5in LCD. The lens can be rotated for high or low shooting.

Find out more at www.nikon.co.uk or call 0800 230 220.

snap shots

EARN MONEY FROM PHOTOS

Scoopt is a new web-based photographic agency designed to sell digital images taken by members of the public.

Described as the 'world's first citizen journalism picture agency', Scoopt is free to join. Members submit photographs from their mobile phones or digital cameras, which can be sold to picture editors for use in magazines, newspapers and websites. Typically when members of the public sell images to picture agencies, they give up copyright and receive a flat fee. However, Scoopt members retain copyright and can expect to receive 50% of the payment from each syndication and licensing deal. Since its launch in August, the site has 2300 members. To find out more, log onto **www.scoopt.com**

BARNARDO'S PHOTO WINNERS

Earlier this year to mark its centenary, Barnardo's held a photographic competition called 'The Face of Multicultural Britain Today' in which entrants were invited to submit a photo along with a 50-word description on this theme.

Winners in the 10-16 age category were Daniel Heineman and Ben Giordano from London; while Natalie Dybisz from Leeds and Alina Kisina from Edinburgh won the 16-25 group; and winners in the 25 and over category included Chris Mole from West Sussex. All the winning photos will appear in the Banardo's 2006 calendar. Proceeds from all sales of the calendar will go to help underprivileged children. Find out more at **www.barnados.org.uk**

VIEW IN A FRAME

PC and TV photo viewing is now possible with the Catalus My Media Digiframe, which can display photos from a memory card. The 8in frame can display JPEG files from a selection of memory cards, along with music and video. It can play slideshows, and pictures can be rotated and deleted. A remote control enables convenient operation. Retailing at £149.99, My Media Digiframe has interchangeable grey and black frames. See **www.digitalera.co.uk**

COLOUR MANAGED SEMINAR

Iridius and Colour Confidence have come together to deliver an interactive one-day event, guaranteeing to provide all delegates with the necessary knowledge and resource to successfully implement and manage effective colour-management workflows.

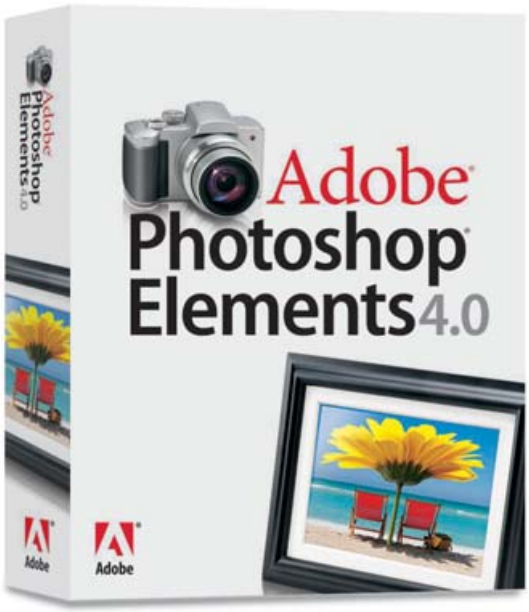
Suitable for users of all levels, this seminar will show how to save money, improve your output quality, deliver higher efficiency and prevent costly production errors. Aimed at photographers, designers, art workers, production staff, managers and digital print shops, it kicks off in Edinburgh on the14th November. It goes to Cardiff on the 16th, Manchester on the 21st, Birmingham on the 23rd, Dublin on the 28th, Cork on the 5th December and London on 7th December. It costs £116.33 (£99 +VAT) to attend, although by registering early it will cost you £92.83 (£79+VAT). Adobe dot. mania members pay £104.58 (£89+VAT). For more information: **http://www.totallycolourmanaged.com**. The offer is available until 6pm on 14th October.

LOWEPRO SLINGSHOT

Lowepro is expanding its range of SlingShot AW bags with two new stylish additions. Both bags incorporate a sling design, enabling you to access your equipment quickly from the side of the bag without removing it from your shoulder.
Available in capacities of 100 or 200 AW, the bags include an All Weather Cover, micro-fibre LCD protector and inbuilt memory card pouch.
The Lowepro SlingShot 100 AW is £59, while the SlingShot 200 AW will cost £69. Find out more from **www.lowepro.co.uk** or by calling 0870 420 4211.

SOFTWARE NEWS

Elementary Editing Tool



Adobe has announced Photoshop Elements 4.0, the latest version of its consumer image-editing software. It builds on the success of version 3.0 with a selection of new features.

The Stack photo feature enables you to position a selection of pictures behind one thumbnail as a 'stack.' Face Tagging is programmed to automatically recognise faces, and you can also assign tags to individual people.

The Magic Selection Brush speeds up the process of making selections, while Automatic red-eye fix automatically recognises and removes the effects of red eye as you download pictures.

Adjust Colour for Skin Tone helps correct skin tones and you can straighten uneven horizons with the new Straighten Tool.

That's not all. The new Order Prints palette enables you to order Kodak prints from within Elements 4.0. Search facilities have also been improved: Elements 4.0 enables you to search using the camera's metadata as well as by colour or history. You can also create slideshows with transitions and pan and zooming effects.

Photoshop Elements 4.0 continues to offer support for a range of different RAW camera formats including: Canon, Nikon, Fujifilm, Konica Minolta, Pentax and Olympus.

Elements 4.0 is only available on the PC platform at present. It will retail for £69.99, or £99.99 bundled with Premiere Elements 2.0. Rebates are available for owners of earlier versions of Elements. See **www.adobe.co.uk** or call 0208 606 4000.

See p44 for our exclusive test.

After Eight Photo Manager

ACD Systems has announced ACDSee 8, the latest version of its photo-management software, complete with new features.

The Quick Search bar enables users to search for an image simply by typing in a word, searching key words, categories and folders, while the Photo Repair Tool can illuminate problems like red eye, scratches and lens flare. There are also 27 filters.

ACDSee 8 can create VCD slideshows with music that can be burnt onto CD. The program supports IPTC metadata fields – such as captions, credits or categories – and enables you to make adjustments or delete the information.

ACDSee 8 is available for Windows 98 SE, ME, 2000 and XP for £27 ($49.99.) Find out more at **www.acdsystems.com**

Take the Tablets

Wacom has introduced the Graphire4 range of graphics tablet.

Graphire4 Classic and Graphire4 Studio are available in A5 and A6 (XL). Studio also includes Photoshop Elements 3.0 and Nik Color Efex Pro 2.0 Standard. A scroll wheel is used for browsing and zooming in and out of photos, while two Express-Keys buttons can be configured to carry out oft-used commands. Wacom has redesigned the cordless pen with two buttons replicating right and double-click commands. You can use the pen upside down as a pressure-sensitive eraser and it is battery free.

Classic and Classic XL are £75 and £150 respectively; Studio and Studio XL are £110 and £180 respectively. See **www.wacom.com** for more details.

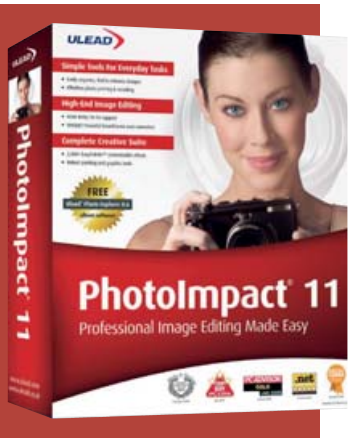
Ulead... We'll Follow

Targeting casual, enthusiast and more creative users, PhotoImpact 11 boasts a host of new features.

Users can choose from five interfaces through the My Workspace palette: basic, standard, graphic design, web design, or customise your own. The improved Browse Manager offers faster performance.

Rectify tonal inaccuracies with SmartCurves, while the SmartRemove tool removes unwanted elements from multiple shots, which can then be combined to create a composite image. Correct chromatic aberration, and fix white balance inaccuracies by adjusting the colour temperature. The Object Extraction Wizard lets you remove an item from its background, and for the first time PhotoImpact offers RAW /DNG, and 16-bit support.

Photo Explorer 8.6, Ulead Cool 360, GIF Animator 5 and PhotoImpact Album 11 are all supplied with PhotoImpact 11, which will be available from **www.ulead.co.uk** for £49.99. Registered users of previous versions will be able to upgrade from £29.99 from Ulead online.



With our digital darkroom, every photograph you've ever taken can now look perfect.

The Epson Stylus Photo RX620 gives you all the flexibility of an all-in-one photo printer, scanner and copier but without sacrificing any of the quality. Now you can scan, retouch, restore, print and archive your old photographs and negatives just as easily as your new digital ones. So every image you've ever captured can now look its best and last longer too.

www.epson.co.uk

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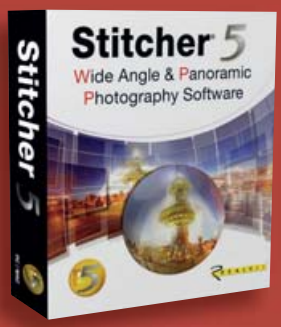
REALVIZ STITCHER 5

Stitcher 5 is the latest version of Realviz's professional panorama-creation software and incorporates a host of new features including an automatic stitching engine.

Features new to version 5 include a fully automatic stitching engine, live preview, redesigned user interface, manual controls, a real-time preview and it can re-import Photoshop Masks. Other features include: online activation, shortcut management, reader set management and it includes 3D stencils that can be edited in the working area.

Stitcher 5 is available for around £336 (499 euros). Owners of version 4 can upgrade for approximately £141 (210 euros) and owners of earlier versions can upgrade for around £168 (250 euros).

Find out more by logging onto **www.realviz.com** or by emailing **sales@realviz.com**



PNY HIGH-SPEED MEMORY CARDS

PNY has launched a range of 133x SecureDigital cards. Available in capacities of 512MB, 1GB and 2GB, the cards are compatible with mobile phones, digital cameras, PDAs and personal computers.

Fast data transfer is promised, with write speeds of 20MB/sec and reading speeds of 5MB/sec.

The 512MB SD card will retail for £49.99, the 1GB card £89.99 and the 2GB card £169.99. Find out more at **www.pny-europe.com**

ROXIO TOAST 7

Toast 7 is Roxio's latest version of its Mac DVD burning software. Toast 7 is the first third-party program to support DivX 6, enabling users to turn files in DivX format into DVD-Video disc, as well as creating DivX HD discs from iMovie HD or Final Cut HD projects. It also offers the facility to create High Definition slideshows from multiple images with pan and zoom effects, music and transitions.

Other new features include: data spanning, an iLife browser, the ability to customise discs, hybrid discs creation, extended video support, VR disc copying and auto disc mounting. Audio support has also been extended.

Toast 7 is available at the end of August for £69.99. For more information just log onto **www.roxio.co.uk**

DXO OPTICS SUPPORT FOR NIKON D50

DxO Optics Pro v3.0 now supports the Nikon D50 and five lenses. The program is designed to improve the picture quality for RAW and JPEG files taken by a digital SLR. The program supports the following Nikon D50 compatible lenses:

AF Nikkor 50mm f/1.8D
AF-S DX Zoom Nikkor 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G ED
AF-S DX Zoom Nikkor 18-70mm f/3.5-4.5G IF-ED
AF-S VR Zoom Nikkor 24-120mm f/3.5-5.6G IF-ED
AF-S DX Zoom Nikkor 55-200 f/4-5.6G ED

For more information or to download a demo version of DxO Optics Pro v.30, log onto **www.dxo.com**

PRINTER & SCANNER NEWS

Burn, Printer, Burn

Lexmark has introduced a new photo printer; the P450 is the first printer to incorporate a CD burner.

Producing 6x4in prints, the **P450** can burn images directly from a memory card to a CD, making it a useful method of archiving.

It can print directly from memory cards including SecureDigital, Memory Stick Pro, Smart Media, xD Picture and CompactFlash, or from a PictBridge-enabled digital camera. With an optional adaptor, it can also print from a Bluetooth-enabled phone.

The 2.4in LCD screen can be used for previewing photographs and for performing basic edits such as red-eye removal, cropping, rotating and colour fixing, along with sepia and antique grey filters.

Najib Bahous from Lexmark comments: 'The Lexmark P450 brings more photo processing functions to the home. People can now save and organise their digital photographs on CD, print from a cell phone, view their photos on a television and much more.'

The Lexmark P450 will retail for £149.99 and is available now. Lexmark has introduced a 6x4-inch printing kit for £27.99 at a cost of 29p per photo.

Find out more at **www.lexmark.co.uk** or by calling 08704 440044.

Kodak Printing Duo

Kodak has introduced two new products into its EasyShare printing line-up incorporating Perfect Touch technology and Wi-Fi.

Boasting the world's largest LCD screen on a snapshot printer, 3.5ins, the £149 **Photo Printer 500** prints from all major memory cards in about a minute, and is PictBridge compatible, printing directly from a digital camera and Bluetooth-enabled devices.

The £129 **Printer Dock Plus Series 3** can produce prints in about a minute directly from a Kodak (or ImageLink enabled) camera, as well as from an SD card thanks to an in-built slot. An 8-in-1 reader is available. The printer can charge the in-camera battery in about 3.5 hours and recondition Kodak Ni-MH batteries.

Both devices include Kodak's Perfect Touch technology, designed to give brighter pictures and reduce dark shadows and red eye. Each can be used with a Wi-Fi enabled computer or network if you buy the optional Wi-Fi card. See **www.kodak.co.uk** or call 0870 243 0270.

Quick Dye

Olympus claims that the P11 is the fastest dye-sublimation photo printer on the market, capable of producing 6x4in prints in 33 seconds.

Lifelike tones are promised from the **P11** – which can also produce borderless prints – thanks to the 16.77 million colours. Prints are UV resistant and feature a laminated guard to protect against sunlight, dirt and heat.

PictBridge compatibility ensures users can obtain prints directly from a digital camera, while a USB port enables it to be connected to a home computer. The P11 can easily fit onto a desktop and will cost £150. See **www.olympus.co.uk** or call 0800 072 0070.

Epson Expands

Epson has introduced two four-colours printers into its Stylus range.

Both the **Stylus D88** and **Stylus D68** print at 5760dpi, while print speeds are 22ppm for the D88, and 17ppm for the D68. Both devices incorporate Epson's Micro Piezo print head technology and can produce A4 borderless prints. The individual ink cartridges mean you only replace a cartridge when it runs out. The D68 is £49 and the D88 is £59. The D88 is also available as a Photo Edition for £69 featuring a photo album and Epson Premium Glossy 7x5in Photo paper.

Epson has also released the £69 **Stylus Photo R200**, offering 5760x1440dpi and utilising six ink cartridges that can be replaced individually. It produces A4 prints and personalised DVDs.

The £99 **DX4800** and £69 **DX3800** are all-in-ones. The DX4800 has five media card slots and scans at 1200dpi resolution; print speeds are 20ppm. PictBridge compatible, it enables fast USB2.0 image transfer. The DX3800 prints 18ppm, and scans at 600dpi. See **www.epson.co.uk** or call 0800 220546.

Look Ma, No PC

HP has introduced the Photosmart 8050, a new photo printer aimed at home users that can be used without a PC.

Print speeds for 6x4inch prints are 27 seconds. It also prints 7x5in and 12x4in panoramic images. Document print speeds are 24ppm for colour and 30ppm for black & white.

Users can print directly from a selection of memory cards: CompactFlash, Memory Stick, SecureDigital, MultiMedia and xD-Picture Cards; while Mini SD and MemoryStick Duo cards can be used with an adaptor. The 8050 is PictBridge-compatible and an optional adaptor allows printing from Bluetooth-enabled devices such as camera phones and PDAs. The 8050 can also print a series of images from a video clip.

The 8050 uses a six-ink printing system incorporating Viera inks. Incorporated into the printer is HP's Real Life Technologies to reduce the effects of red-eye, while Adaptive Lighting can improve exposure problems.

The **HP Photosmart 8050 Photo Printer** is available now for £99. For more information visit **www.hp.com/uk**

Come Say Hello

A host of exhibitors including What Digital Camera will be at the biggest event in the Mac calendar – Mac Expo, held next month at Olympia's National Hall, Kensington, London.

Split into five colour-coded 'Experiences': Design & Publishing; Digital Audio & Video; Digital Imaging; Games, MP3 & Music; and Business Solutions, exhibitors include Adobe, Canon, Extensis, HP, Konica Minolta, Microsoft and Sony. Demonstrations, training advice and lectures ensure that the exhibition is interactive. The Games Experience has been enhanced and there is a Music Experience and Digital Lounge.

Mac Expo runs from 27-29 October. Tickets cost £12 on the door or you can save money by pre-registering. Visit **www.mac-expo.co.uk**

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA
Next Month

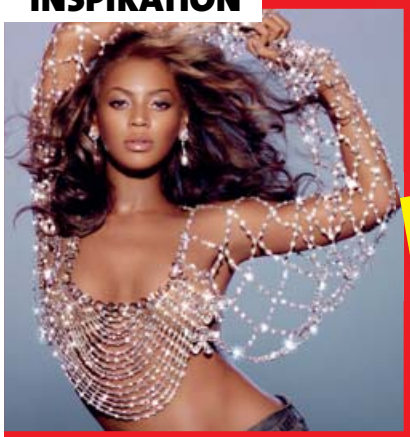
BIG TEST
Canon EOS 5D
Cheapest ever full-frame DSLR!

PLUS
FREE!
TWO FANTASTIC SUPPLEMENTS

TRIED AND TESTED
Fujifilm S9500
Olympus SP500
High-end flashguns
Website templates
and much more....

TECHNIQUE
DIY Calendar
Design and make a stylish Xmas gift

INSPIRATION



Klinko & Indrani
You know their pictures – if not their names

24 PAGE BUYING GUIDE
- Find the perfect camera for you this Christmas
- Everything from camera phones to digital SLRs

AND
DIGITAL SLR MASTERCLASS
Tips, techniques and inspiration for your best ever pictures

ON SALE 4TH NOV

© Matt Hoyle

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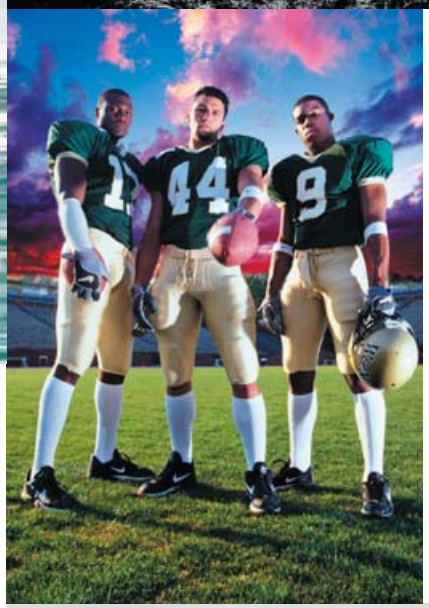


© Guy Crittenden

© Michael Hall

READ

Outdoor Photography: Portraits

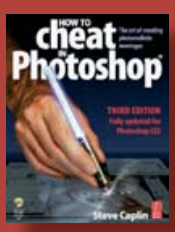
Cathy Joseph
AVA
£24.95

This richly illustrated guide to using light in digital portrait photography is split into seven chapters covering the key aspects of: Mood, Setting, Character, Image, Themes & Styles, Pairs & Groups, and Props & Frames.

Rather than actually telling you how to take a particular type of portrait, each self-contained spread contains background detail from the author about the concept behind a photograph, along with information about composition, location and lighting and the camera settings. Each spread also features a diagram illustrating the location of the sun in relation to the camera.

The photographs used throughout the book are incredibly diverse, particular favourites include Jim Allen's picture of a female boxer in a field, Michael Hall's shot of Samurai warriors and Frederic Pascual's portrait of a young girl with plaits. It is also interesting to gain an insight into what the photographer was thinking when they composed the scene.

Anyone with a strong interest in portrait photography will benefit from reading this book. The only drawback, though, is the price, which – at around £25 for a paperback – isn't cheap. **HB**



How to cheat in Photoshop

Steve Caplin
Focal Press
£24.99

If you've ever looked at an advert and wondered 'how did they do that?' then this book is for you. The third edition of Steve Caplin's 'How to cheat in Photoshop,' is an invaluable guide to creating impressive montages from your digital photographs. Composed primarily of step-by-steps, the tome is packed with useful shortcuts and time saving tips. Included with the book is a CD-Rom containing the tutorial images, 20 quick-time movies and a selection of royalty free images. **HB**

Konica Minolta Dynax 7D

Peter K. Burian
Lark Books, £14.95

Canon EOS 20D

Rob Sheppard
Lark Books, £14.95

The Magic Lantern Guides focus on two popular SLRs, the Canon EOS 20D and Konica Minolta Dynax 7D and as well as explaining what individual features do, it explains how to use them. At 176 and 254 pages respectively there is plenty of information here, though more photographic examples to illustrate would be useful and it is a shame the photos are all in black & white. However, if you own either of these cameras and are having trouble getting to grips with their features then they are worth the investment. **HB**

Black and white digital photography

Les Meeham
Collins and Brown
£17.99

Aimed at newcomers to digital, and experienced photographers switching to digital from film, this tome is packed with information relevant to b&w photography, covering many useful skills including camera calibration, depth of field, the digital zone system and film scanning. The chapter on image enhancement examines Photoshop filters and gives advice on how to replicate film techniques like infrared and toning. While perhaps a bit too detailed for beginners, this book is recommended. **HB**

Top: The Ashes 2005, ©Philip Brown
Above: Remains of the bombed-out No. 30 bus, ©Eddie Mulholland
Left: A reveller at the Notting Hill Carnival, ©Stephen Lock

SURF

www.telegraph.co.uk

The Daily Telegraph online

The Daily Telegraph online is not only a useful resource for the latest news, sport, entertainment and business developments, but its picture galleries are also a valuable source for photographs.

Split into categories including: News, Politics, Obituaries, Celebrities, Entertainment, Sport, Motoring, Fashion, Travel and the Arts, the news section is particularly extensive enabling you to view photographs from May 2004, while you can peruse pictures from the Arts dating back to January 2004.

The quantity of photographs on display is incredibly diverse, starting with the most recent events, and are listed by date. Viewing photographs is easy: just click on the event and a pop-up box appears enabling you to scroll through the photographs. As well as captions, some photographs contain links that take you to the relevant article – it is particularly interesting to see the photographs that weren't included in the paper edition.

From the Telegraph's staff photographers to picture libraries such as PA, Getty and Reuters, the standard of pictures on display is impressive, making www.telegraph.co.uk a valuable resource for anyone who is interested in the best of press photography. **HB**

www.photonotes.org/dictionary.

Digital photography is full with technological terms that can be confusing for newcomers. This site features a comprehensive dictionary offering explanations of digital photography terms; simply type in the word and hit 'Search' to get a comprehensible explanation. The site also includes a useful explanation of symbols used on digital cameras. **HB**

http://news.google.co.uk/

Google isn't just a popular search facility; it is also a useful news resource. The Science and Technology section is a valuable source for the latest gadget news from around the world, providing regularly updated information about the latest software and hardware developments, along with direct links to the story from different news agencies. **HB**

www.digicamhistory.com

Organised chronologically, DigiCamHistory.Com has photographs of key cameras from the birth of digital photography, many looking positively archaic in comparison to today's sleek and shiny compacts. Don't be put off by the amateur design, this non-profit site is well worth a visit – at the very least, so you can smile at early digital incarnations. **HB**

PANASONIC FZ30

quick view

PRICE £550

- SENSOR: 8.3MP/8MP effective
- SHUTTER SPEED: 60-1/2000sec
- ISO: 80-400
- EXP MODES: Auto,P, A, S, M, Sc
- FLASH: GN 7m (Auto), hotshoe
- VIEWFINDER/MONITOR: EVF/2" LCD
- OTHER: SD, Pict Bridge, USB 2.0, Mega OIS, RAW, TIFF, JPEG
- POWER: Li-Ion
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT: 141 x 86 x 138 mm/740g

8 mega pixels

TAKE THE 360° VIRTUAL TOUR
ONLY ON THE WEB
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Little Big Man

Panasonic has beefed up an old favourite and produced a camera closer to a DSLR. **Jamie Harrison** finds out if the FZ30 lives up to the performance of its predecessors

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Above: At 420mm, the lens is capable of some very sharp results

Above: Every little hair on these monkeys is visible
Right: The light is nicely captured but there is some camera shake

Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ30

Back in 2002 a package landed on my desk containing the first of a new series of Panasonic cameras. Previously I had been unimpressed with most of the cameras from the firm, but opening the box gave me a pleasant surprise: the camera was like a mini SLR, with a Leica lens and delicious style. Even more surprising was how much fun I had using it in the ensuing days. Best of all, though, was the image quality. Considering it was only 2MP, low even then, the camera churned out remarkable results, and with the help of Genuine Fractals, I produced surprisingly good A3 prints.

Now we have the sixth incarnation of the range, and each new model has continued to impress. However, competition is more intense, with most manufacturers now offering similarly specified cameras with long lenses – the so-called Super-zoom cameras. Some even match Panasonic's once-unique feature of Optical Image Stabilisation (OIS) – Nikon has VR, Canon its IS and Konica Minolta has an Anti-Shake CCD.

Image-stabilisation technology reduces the effects of camera shake by allowing 2-3 stops slower shutter speeds to be used, or even better, slower ISO speeds for better image quality.

Fujifilm takes a different approach to reducing the risk of camera shake on some of its cameras (ie the F10 and new S9500) by offering an increased sensitivity, with a top ISO of 1600 and noise reduction. This enables faster shutter speeds to be used, though the noise reduction does add some softening to the image. Both systems have merits and flaws.

Like its precursors, the Panasonic FZ30 has a 12x DC Leica Elmarit lens, but this one has a 7.4-88.8mm focal length: the equivalent of 35-420mm on a 35mm camera. The FZ20 had a 6-72mm lens (36-432mm). This change is partly due to the different sensor used. Where the FZ20 has a 1/2.5'' 5MP CCD, the FZ30 uses a 1/1.8'' 8MP sensor. The lens had to be redesigned to match the new sensor, with a larger imaging circle. The lens still has a Manual focus ring, which in MF mode,

see more on the web

Download our DMC-FZ30 test images on our website,

www.whatdigitalcamera.com

top

The camera looks like an SLR. Notice the manual zoom and focus rings on the lens. Very nice

front

That lens dominates the front, but you can just make out the dial on the grip

side

A set of buttons on the side of the lens access the focus options from manual to auto to macro

up against

CHECK OUT THESE SIMILAR CAMERAS IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON PRO 1
£450

NIKON 8800
£500

KONICA MINOLTA A200
£370

buying guide

TURN TO PAGE 134 FOR OUR EXTENSIVE BUYING GUIDE

WE'LL HELP YOU TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT CAMERA AT THE RIGHT PRICE

Panasonic FZ30

EVF
The electronic viewfinder has 230,000 pixels allowing clearer, sharper images and better refresh rate

LCD
The FZ30 continues to use a 2in screen, but Panasonic has added a flip-and-twist type, so images can be taken from low or high angles and the screen can be folded inwards to the body for protection

REAR COMMAND DIAL
Works in conjunction with a front dial. This allows the user to make quick and easy changes to camera settings such as aperture and shutter

works in conjunction with an enlarged central portion of the viewfinder to allow fine focusing.

A new addition to the lens though is a manual zoom ring, instead of the electronic zoom control around the shutter release, allowing more precise, smoother zooming. The AF too, has been revamped, with a choice of focusing points, with a nine-point sensor, and increased AF speed.

When zooming or focusing, things are much clearer in the new electronic viewfinder, which has an increased pixel count of 230,000 pixels, making viewed scenes sharper and clearer, and an improved refresh rate make this the best EVF we have yet seen on a Panasonic camera. Similarly the LCD has had a revamp. Still at two inches, the screen now is a flip-and-twist type, which offers protection for the screen and allows viewing from unusual or awkward angles. Again, the screen has had a resolution upgrade to 230,000 pixels, allowing better viewing and better detail checking of taken images.

Both EVF and LCD benefit from Panasonic's expertise in video, and the video feed to the screens and for movies has been improved. The new sensor allows 30fps VGA movies, and Panasonic claims that the sensor provides more luminous signals providing better quality video, with better brightness and moiré suppression. In terms of viewfinder and LCD, this increase in luminance provides better viewing in low light.

Mode Dial

Like an SLR, the camera's modes are chosen from here. The dial includes the standard modes of Program, Manual, Aperture Priority and Shutter Priority AE modes, as well as video and scene modes

> 'This is the best EVF we have yet seen on a Panasonic camera'

A major addition to the new camera is the inclusion of RAW files, rather than only JPEG recording. This is also backed up by TIFF, which writes to the card remarkably quickly, considering the file size of 24MB, in about three seconds (based on using a SanDisk Ultra II SD card).

Panasonic's Venus II processor is present, which offers a super-fast startup time of 0.97seconds, and a 0.01sec shutter lag, making the camera much more responsive than its predecessor. The Venus II engine also allows for better images, not only in resolution terms but correcting for optical errors such as vignetting and colour aberration.

Further improvements include a wider selection of scene modes, 14 in all, including Soft skin, Baby and Starry sky. There's also manual, shutter priority AE, aperture priority AE, Program AE and auto. Camera handling in manual and AE modes has been improved by the inclusion of two control dials on the front and back of the body, replacing the awkward shift-type buttons of the earlier models.

Finally, the battery has been redesigned and offers up to 280 shots on a single charge.

HANDLING & PERFORMANCE

This isn't so much an upgrade as a major rethink and redesign. As such, Panasonic has produced a beefed up version of an old favourite and a camera closer to a DSLR, in spirit at least, if not in performance. No one should view this type of camera as a direct competitor to the SLR, but they could certainly be considered as an alternative. The all-in-one factor is an attractive proposition, and this camera has that in bucket loads. In handling terms, it's smaller than an SLR, but not that much smaller than say, the Pentax *ist DL. Features such as the manual focus and zoom ring are also designed to bring the camera one step closer to SLR functionality.

In some ways, this bulking up of the camera has led to it losing some of its quirky appeal and look, especially as the past couple of years have seen the superzoom category expand so much. Panasonic practically invented the category with the FZ1, but the likes of Konica Minolta, Sony, Canon and Nikon have all entered it with strong contenders. The FZ30 stands up well, but doesn't stand out as much as it once did.

The FZ30 is bigger and almost 50% heavier than

image quality

One of the good things about the Panasonic FZ30 is that in RAW mode, a low-compression JPEG is included, so even if you can't open the RAW file in Photoshop, you can open a JPEG at least. Hopefully Adobe will update the RAW software soon, so that full advantage can be made of the camera.

In PhotoImpression, the RAW files look a little soft, which we expect, but the limited software denies the full advantage of shooting RAW.

The JPEGs though, are generally very good, as long as you keep the ISO down to 80 or 100 – move up to ISO 200 and see noise coming in.

Colours are very good throughout, though the white balance can often seem a tad on the cold side in shady conditions. Generally, though, it performs very well.

Sharpness is good too, even though I'd exercise caution at the long extremities of the lens, because there is still a danger of camera shake even using the Mega OIS. This is possibly due to the 8MP sensor.

We have seen higher instances of camera shake with the higher-resolution sensors, and surmise that it is owing to the smaller pixel pitch and the closeness of those pixels. However, the Mega OIS is still useful, and a stop or two slower shutter speeds than usual is still possible.

When care is used though, the images are very good indeed and live up to Panasonic's reputation. Primary colours record very well, and more subtle tones reproduce nicely.

Image Quality

This picture, taken in the new Monkey Forest at Trentham, shows where the FZ30 falls down. The noise, even at ISO 200, is quite severe. Furthermore, the shady surroundings of the woods, combined with the necessarily long telephoto lens, meant the Mega OIS system had to be used. Of all the photos taken, few were pin sharp; this shot is an exception. The reason seems to be a combination of camera shake, due to the higher sensor resolution, and subject movement, due to the slow shutter times.

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA

LENS
The newly designed DC Leica Elmarit lens offers the equivalent of 35-420mm, with a maximum aperture of f/2.8-3.7, instead of the FZ20's continual f/2.8. Panasonic also produces add-on lenses for longer tele or wideangle usage
FOCUS AND ZOOM RING
The lens features manually controlled manual focus and zoom rings, offering a conventional design and usage to a high-tech camera
FLASH OPTIONS
A built-in flash allows some amount of fill and extra lighting, and is fine for general purpose, but better results can be achieved by using a dedicated flash unit on the hotshoe
300 200 135 90 70 50 35
12x
OFF ON

<< the FZ20. That's no bad thing though, as it lends the camera gravitas. Psychologically you feel like you're using a proper camera and will therefore endeavour to take proper pictures, just as an SLR forces you to consider your photography more than you would with a compact.

The right hand grip places the shutter release button in a perfect position for comfortable shooting, though the front command dial, which controls the aperture, could be placed slightly higher because there's a small amount of hand repositioning needed to reach it. Similarly the thumb-controlled rear command dial (for the shutter speeds) requires a small backward stretch, which is a little uncomfortable – move it half an inch to the left and it would be perfect (for my hands at least). However the pertinent point is that now the Lumix FZ30 actually has usable command dials and is much quicker to use and make camera changes.

'The camera struggles to find and stay focused on moving subjects'

The camera is quite light on external controls, and some oft-needed controls have to be accessed from the menu. In shooting mode, it isn't too bad – most are on the first page, so it is fairly quick to change the ISO speed and WB. With an ISO range of 80–400, the camera is fairly average, and I would like a little more reach into the upper regions of sensitivity. I was shooting at full tele in a shady wood, and the risk of camera shake was still ever present, so ISO 800 would have helped. The new lens compounds this: previously the maximum aperture was a continual f/2.8, so the FZ30 loses a half stop at the tele end with a maximum aperture of f/3.7.

The menu system is very simple to use. All the camera controls are in this menu, and you need to scroll down to get to things like the metering and AF patterns, which can be a pain – I like to quickly switch to spot metering or single AF points for example, so in that way it can slow down the workflow. As a positive, though, the advantage of an EVF means the menu can be seen in the finder, so with practice, changes can happen quickly.

The question that all camera manufacturers have to ask, is where to put the buttons. Konica Minolta, for example, often loads the camera with external buttons, which can be intimidating, and recent models have seen more of those functions placed into the menu. It's all a question of balance, and I'm sure that the manufacturers all face a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' scenario. I think in this case, though, Panasonic has just gone slightly too far on the menu-based system.

Zooming and manual focus is much improved: the extra resolution of the EVF really helps to focus on subject detail, and the manual focus ring is responsive. The continuous AF could be faster, though: the camera struggles to find and stay focused on moving subjects, while single servo focusing is fine if the subject is reasonably static.

As far as the zoom goes, the addition of a 'traditional' zoom ring on the lens really is a step forward for the company. Zooming is precise, with none of the focal length steps that so often happen with electronic, button-based zoom lenses.

One area Panasonic is really excelling at the moment is video – not surprisingly for a company that makes TV broadcasting and motion picture equipment. The video mode of the FZ30, and some other recent Panasonic models, is really very good. With 30fps shooting, video is smooth and the luminance of the capture is excellent, even in low light, and is better than most systems, even MPEG 4, I've seen recently. that I've seen recently.

On the downside, there is no RAW plug-in for Photoshop included, so you have to use the basic software included on the CD, and for Mac users, that includes the horrible PhotoImpression 5.

VERDICT

The FZ series is growing up, but has stiffer competition than it has ever had as it moves into the realm of the big boys. In some ways Panasonic has made that transition well; the features and specs are good and, with care, the FZ30 can produce excellent results. However, it isn't perfect: it suffers from noise after ISO 200, and the increased resolution makes camera shake more likely, despite the Mega OIS. It's still worth using some support for slower shutter speeds and long focal lengths. The menu-based system slows the camera down too.

To end on a good note though, the camera is still fun to use, feels a lot more professional than ever, and is a good indication of how fast Panasonic has moved in the past three years. At this rate, the company's first SLR, due next year, should be very exciting. WDC

specifications

MANUFACTURER	Panasonic
MODEL	Lumix FZ30
PRICE	£550
SENSOR	8.3MP Total/8MP effective 7.18x5.32mm 1/1.8" CCD 3264 X 2448 pixels
MAX PRINT SIZE	16.32x12.24in @200ppi
LENS	Leica DC Vario-Elmarit 7.4-88.8mm f/28-37 (35-420mm equiv)
SHUTTER SPEED	60-1/2000sec
ISO	ISO 80-400
EXP MODES	Auto, P, A, S, M, Sc
FLASH	GN 7m (Auto), slow sync, hotshoe, red eye reduction
SCENE MODES	Portrait, Sports, Scenery, Night Scenery, Night Portrait, Fireworks, Party, Snow, Self-Portrait, Food, Baby, Soft Skin, Candle, Starry Sky
METER	Intelligent Multiple/ Centre Weighted/ Spot
WHITE BALANCE	Auto, presets, custom, WB bracket, Kelvin
FOCUS	9-point selectable AF or manual, single, continuous
VIEWFINDER	Electronic Viewfinder 230,000 pixels
MONITOR	2" TFT, 230,000 pixels
CONNECTION	USB
FILE	RAW, JPEG, TIFF
FILE SUPPORT	EXIF 2.21, DPOF 1.1, PictBridge
VIDEO OUTPUT	NTSC/PAL
POWER	Rechargeable Li-Ion
STORAGE	SD
DIMENSIONS	140.75 x 85.5 x 138.1mm
WEIGHT	740g

scores

PROS: Good feature set, better handling than ever, good image quality possible, EVF

CONS: Noise at higher ISO, camera shake, menu-based features, RAW conversion

features	18
ease of use	17
image quality	17
design	16
value	17

85%

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Panasonic Lumix DMC-FX8 with Optical Image Stabiliser (O.I.S.)

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* The LEICA DC VARIO-ELMARIT lens is manufactured using measurement instruments and a quality assurance system that have been certified by Leica Camera AG based on the company's quality standards. ** O.I.S. images are simulated.

KONICAMINOLTA DIMAGE Z6

quick view

PRICE £349.99

- **CCD** 1/2.5-inch 6.0 MP effective/6.4MP total
- **LENS** 5.83-69.9mm f2.8-4.5 (35mm equ 35-420mm)
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 4 – 1/1000th sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50, 100, 200, 320
- **EXPOSURE MODES** A, AP, M, P, SP, Auto, 5 scene modes
- **FLASH** ISO 100 equ 8m/26.2f
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Electronic/ 2.0-inch TFT LCD, 114,000 pixels
- **OTHER** 320 x 240 movie mode, 4 colour modes, 1cm super macro, SD
- **POWER** 4x AA cells
- **DIMENSIONS** 108.5 x80 x84mm/ 340g

top

Adjust the focus of the electronic viewfinder to suit your eyesight by scrolling the adjacent dioptre adjuster up and down

front

The Z6 can be used with an optional 26mm wideangle converter, which is available as part of the ZCW-300 kit

side

Supplied with the Z6 is a secure neck strap that fits through the metal eyelet

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up against

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CANON S2 IS
£340

PANASONIC FZ20
£370

buying guide

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WE WILL HELP YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT CAMERA AT THE RIGHT PRICE

6 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

KonicaMinolta DiMAGE Z6

The Z6 is the latest megazoom in Konica Minolta's DiMAGE series. **Hannah Bouckley** puts it to the test

In our July issue I looked at the DiMAGE Z5, a camera that impressed with its versatile lens and capable feature set. The Z6 is its follow-up and the major difference is – you've guessed it – the addition of an extra megapixel. This creates images 2816x2112 pixels in size, equating to 14x11 inch prints at 200dpi, although the camera retains the 1/2.5-inch sensor.

Available in silver or – as a Jessops exclusive – a smart black colour that we road tested, the chassis is constructed from tough plastic; the reinforced grip fits your hand well and it is light enough to use one-handed. The build quality is satisfactory, although I am a little dubious about the durability of the memory card door and the optical zoom control, both of which could snap off if handled too vigorously.

Press the On/Off button and it takes just over two seconds for the 35-420mm lens to extend before you can take a photograph, which is pleasing. In comparison to its rivals in the mega-zoom market like the Sony H1, the Z6's two-inch LCD screen is a touch on the small size. Unfortunately its performance is inconsistent; I used the camera on a sunny weekend away in August and struggled to compose shots using the screen – even after adjusting the brightness - and had to switch to the EVF.

You can choose between Single AF, Continuous AF and Manual focusing. Single AF is generally accurate and quick at detecting the focus area using five points weighted, while Continuous AF with predictive auto focus utilises the large focusing area at the centre of the frame. On occasion, when the lens is at telephoto position, the AF system takes several attempts to achieve focus lock, particularly on objects that are nearer the lens. Full-time AF continually focuses on the scene and, while a little slower to focus, saves focusing time in situations where you may be taking lots of photographs – that is, if you can get used to the irritating noise. Macro and Super Macro mode are selectable through a button adjacent to the shutter: in standard mode the Z6 can focus from 10cm, decreasing to 1cm in Super Macro mode, though the lens is fixed at wide angle. Results yield plenty of detail, though do use the LCD screen to check the sharpness.

As expected, there's a full set of exposure modes (Manual, Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority and Program), while Exposure Compensation can be adjusted from +/-2EV in one-third increments (disabled in Manual mode). You can choose between multi-segment, centreweighted and spot metering; select from sensitivity levels of 50, 100, 200 and 320; and adjust Colour mode, Sharpness and Contrast.

Most of these commands are located in the menu, but it would save time if you could access them through a button on the camera body. Scene modes include: night portrait, landscape, action, portrait and beach – though when they are selected, manual features are curtailed.

Featuring the same bright f/2.8-4.5 lens used on

THREE-WAY LEVER
Flick this switch to swap between playback and record (using the LCD) and record (using the viewfinder) modes

INFO BUTTON
Hit the information button in playback mode to display file information and view your images as thumbnails. Press it in record mode to view a live histogram

BATTERY HOLDER
Supplied with the Z6 are four disposable AA cells that fit under the handgrip. They have the capacity to take 240 frames according to CIPA standard

image quality

Pictures produced by the Z6 are generally accurate, skin tones are well represented and colours are true to life, thanks to the CxProcess III, which is designed to produce colours as the human eye sees them. Purple fringing is evident – as expected – in high contrast situations. Image noise is visible in the red and blue channel at ISO 100, although it only really becomes noticeable in all channels at ISO 200, while it is much more evident at the maximum sensitivity setting of ISO 320.

see more on the web

Download our DiMAGE Z6 test images on our website

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the Z5, which is superb for wildlife photography, the Z6 takes about 1.5-seconds to move from wide to telephoto position. Like the Konica Minolta A200 and Dynax 5D, the Z6 includes Anti-Shake technology, a feature that works by moving the CCD to compensate for camera

> 'Skin tones are well represented and colours are true to life'

movement (or shake) and is particularly useful when the lens is at telephoto position. Konica Minolta claims that it enables shutter speeds two or three stops lower to be utilised. There are two modes: choose from Display and Exposure (that activates anti-shake the moment the shutter is pressed).

Featuring an effective Continuous Shooting mode of 1.8fps for 20 frames (standard quality), the Z6 is a fairly fast camera to use. Shutter lag isn't a problem and shot cycle time is very respectable at about 1.5secs for JPEGS taken at maximum image size and optimum quality. However, the DiMAGE does take a rather frustrating three seconds to startup when in sleep mode.

VERDICT

One thing I admire about the DiMAGE Z series is its quirky appearance and refusal to submit to a perhaps more conventionally pleasing exterior, preferring to let the cameras' abilities speak for themselves. The Z6 is no exception. While not a radical update to the Z5 (in fact there is nothing here to tempt owners of that camera), it is comfortable to hold, intuitive to operate, and packed with features. This is even without referring to its main selling points: namely the impressive 12x optical zoom and Anti-Shake technology. Throw in the good results and the Z6 is recommended. **WDC**

specifications

MANUFACTURER:	KonicaMinolta
MODEL:	Dimage Z6
PRICE:	£349.99
CCD:	1/2.5-inch 6.0 MP effective/6.4MP total
MAX PRINT SIZE:	14.08 x 10.56-inch at 200dpi
LENS:	5.83-69.9mm f2.8-4.5 (35mm equ 35-420mm)
SHUTTER SPEEDS:	4-1/1000sec
ISO:	Auto, 50, 100, 200, 320
EXP MODES:	A, AP, M, P, SP, A, 5 scene modes
FLASH:	ISO 100 equ 8m/26.2f
DRIVE MODES:	Single, burst, multi burst, exposure bracket
METER:	Multi-segment, spot, centre-weighted
WHITE BALANCE:	A, 5 preset, custom
FOCUS:	Single-shot AF, Continuous AF (with predictive focus control), Full time AF, Manual focus,
VIEWFINDER:	Electronic
MONITOR:	2.0-inch TFT LCD, 114,000 pixels
CONNECTION:	USB 2.0, AV, DC
REC FORMAT:	Jpeg, Motion Jpeg with audio, DCF 2.0, DPOF 1.1, Exif 2.2
FILE TYPE:	Pictbridge, EXIF print, Print Image Matching III
VIDEO OUTPUT:	NTSC, Pal
POWER:	4xAA
STORAGE:	SD, MMC
OTHER:	320 x 240 at 30fps movie mode, 4 colour modes, 1cm super macro
DIMENSIONS:	108.5 x80 x84mm
WEIGHT:	340g

scores

PROS: Fast operation, lens

CONS: LCD hard to see in bright sunlight, some components feel weak

features	18
ease of use	16
image quality	17
design	16
value	18

85%

NIKON COOLPIX 5900

quick view

PRICE £299

- **SENSOR** 1/1.8inch CCD (Total 5.26MP, Effective 5.1MP)
- **LENS** 38-114mm f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P,+18 scene, ±2EV
- **ISO** Auto, 64-400
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 3 modes
- **MONITOR** 2inch 115,000 pixel TFT
- **OTHER** 640x480 15fps Video, xD SD Card plus 13.5Mb internal
- **POWER** Lithium ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 88 x 60 x 36.5mm/150g

5 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

top

The power button, shutter release button and mode dial are all found on the 5900's top plate

front

The flash is beside the viewfinder window and the autofocus illumination LED

side

A rubber flap allows a power cable to run into the battery chamber with the optional AC adaptor kit

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

FUJIFILM F10

£230

scores

PROS: Ease of use for the less-experienced user

CONS: A little prone to camera shake

features	17
ease of use	17
image quality	17
design	16
value	18

85%

see more on the web

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Nikon Coolpix 5900

Joël Lacey tests this D-Lightful Coolpix compact model

Nikon's D-Lighting system means the opposite of what it sounds like. The D-Lighting system rescues underexposed images – in camera and without the need of a PC. This is an admirable function.

The 5900 has a 5.1 effective megapixel sensor, a 3x (38-114mm equivalent) zoom, and an array of exposure and focusing modes. On the latter front it gives the choice of a five-area AF, a choice of any one of 99 manually selected focus points. Minimum focus in macro mode is 4cm at the wideangle end.

On the exposure side there's a 256-area matrix metering mode as well as centreweighted, average and spot metering modes. The last of these can be either the central area or based on a selected focusing point. Shutter speeds are 4-1/2000sec and there's exposure compensation too. With all this and a backlight compensation mode, you'd have thought this would make the D-Lighting system redundant, but it's commendable that Nikon knows that even with all these automated and manually over-rideable functions, a digital camera can still underexpose, and provide the means to overcoming it.

On the handling side the 5900 seems a little complicated in terms of the amount of information it displays on the 2in screen, but this is an illusory notion (Anyway, you can choose how much info to display.) In practice the 5900 is a doddle to use. This I proved with the aid of my father who, while not entirely a photographic novice, is not wise in the black arts of digital cameras. His results were, in all but one aspect, technically fine. That aspect is the Achilles' heel of the camera. While the f/2.8 aperture of the wideangle end of the zoom suffices, the f/4.9 maximum aperture is a little dark to eliminate the possibility of camera shake. With admirable honesty, the 5900 tells you that your images have camera shake and asks if you want to keep them.

The mixture of dial, buttons and menus gives a nice balance between keeping the clutter down and speed of access for important functions, and it should not, even with the surprisingly broad specification of the 5900, take the new user too long to tame the essential functions.

What about the performance? Well, the 5900 nearly, but not quite, lives up to the promise offered by its specification and handling. It does tend to err just a little too much on the dark side from an exposure point of view in fully auto mode. Focusing and image processing are very confidently handled and – the reservation about the dangers of camera shake at the longest focal length aside – there's not much to mark the camera down on.

VERDICT

This is an almost perfect example of a simple camera that can subsequently grow with the user as he or she becomes more confident. The 'almost' in the above sentence should not be interpreted as a reason for not buying it, merely an indication of the giant strides Nikon has taken in camera design, and the baby steps yet left to achieve a starter camera nirvana. **WDC**

DELETE BUTTON
Although there are many multi-function buttons, the delete button is wisely kept as a single-purpose control

PLAY BUTTON
The camera can be switched on by a prolonged press on the play button as well as via the power button on the topplate

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5 Megapixels - 3x Optical Zoom

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~~£270~~ **£247**

Fuji FinePix Z1 Black

5.1 Megapixels - 3x Optical Zoom

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Kodak Easyshare Z740

5.36 Megapixels - 10x Optical Zoom

~~£237~~ **£193**

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Nikon Coolpix S1

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~~£304~~ **£229**

Pentax Optio SVI
5.36 Megapixels - 5x Optical Zoom
~~£270~~ **£194**

Nikon Coolpix 5600
4.106 Megapixels - 3x Optical Zoom
~~£196~~ **£141**

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PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-LX1

quick view

PRICE £450

- **SENSOR** 1/1.65inch CCD (Total 8.61MP, Effective 8.4MP)
- **LENS** 28-112mm f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 60-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M, A, S, P + 14 Scene
- **FLASH** Auto plus 6
- **ISO** Auto, 80-400
- **MONITOR** None/ 2.5inch 207,000 pixel TFT
- **OTHER** 848x480 30fps video, SD, JPEG, RAW, TIFF
- **POWER** Lithium ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 106 x 56 x 25.5mm/185g

8 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

top

Power and shutter release buttons, plus there is a switch on top of the lens that changes the aspect ratio between 3:2, 4:3 and 16:9

front

The flash is manually popped up from its recessed position even in fully auto mode

side

The focusing modes of AF, AF macro and manual are selected by a switch on the side of the lens

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up against

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX F810
£250

CASIO P700
£300

OLYMPUS MJU 800
£300

buying guide

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Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX1

The world's first true widescreen-format CCD gets **Joël Lacey's** full attention

Those who have worked with me over the 24 years since I started writing about cameras will know I'm not easily swayed by manufacturers' innovations unless I can see the point in them. The 16:9 format, while a nice idea from a compositional perspective, is more attuned to TV display than 'proper' photos. The technological stride forward required to produce a chip that can capture these images is something else entirely.

In addition to this new size of chip of 1/1.65inches, the LX1 has the full panoply of features that one associated with Panasonic's recent models: optical image stabilisation, a full range of focusing and metering modes, useful focal length range on the zoom and a shutter speed range capable of dealing with anything but a rooftop fly-by from the Royal Air Force.

In a little more detail the LX1 has three focusing modes: macro AF (down to 5cm at wideangle), normal AF and manual focus. The manual focus has the added function of a much magnified central section to aid with visual confirmation of correct focus point. On the metering side there's a sophisticated multiple-area metering pattern in addition to the less 'intelligent' but more predictable metering modes of centre-weighted and spot. There's exposure compensation as well in the automatic modes (Program, Shutter priority, Aperture priority and 14 scene modes). The lens has an aperture range of a wide-ish f/2.8 to a slightly dim f/4.9, which is where the optical image stabilisation comes into play, hopefully preventing the blurring caused by too slow a shutter speed in low light.

OIS (Optical Image Stabilising) reduces the visible effects of camera shake. It gives you a couple of shutter speeds worth of improvement, but for long exposures or for too great an amplitude of camera movement it will not always be able to completely eliminate the blurring effect.

Like the Fuji F810, this mode offers a choice of aspect ratio. The difference here is that you get full resolution at the 16:9 aspect ratio, while the 4:3 and 3:2 images are ones where the unused pixels are simply that – unused – rather than a 4:3 ratio.

This means that switching to 16:9 means you actually retain image quality rather than losing it.

All the technology sits within a very nicely formed and nicely built metal casing. The huge screen dominates the rear of the camera with reasonably few controls disturbing the otherwise smooth lines. The controls themselves are sleek and well manufactured with a positive feel to their operation.

In terms of usage, the 2.5in screen is not supplemented by an optical viewfinder so hand-holding means that the OIS comes in handy. What the large screen does provide is the opportunity to use larger lettering for ease of reading. Though the screen can be a bit cluttered to the uninitiated, you can reduce or remove the information shown on screen. The use of more buttons and switches on this camera than normal has the effect of making it a lot easier to use

DISPLAY BUTTON
The display button gives access to different levels of on-screen information including a 'rule of thirds' grid for compositions where true horizontals and verticals are important

BACKPLATE
The back-plate has both a joystick and a four-way button cluster. The latter is used more often but the joystick comes into play for the manual focusing

specifications

MANUFACTURER:	Panasonic
MODEL:	Lumix DMC-LX1
PRICE:	£448.99
CCD:	1/1.65inch CCD
	(Total 8.61MP, Effective 8.4MP)
MAX PRINT SIZE:	3840x2160
LENS:	28-112mm f/2.8-4.9; min focus 5cm
	(macro) 50cm (normal)
SHUTTER SPEEDS:	60-1/2000sec
ISO:	Auto, 80-400
EXP MODES:	MASP + 14 scene
FLASH:	range: 4m at 28mm
METER:	Intelligent multiple area metering,
	centre-weighted, spot
WHITE BALANCE:	Auto plus six presets and manual
	±1500K setting
FOCUS:	TTL contrast, with nine, six, thee or one
	AF point. Normal AF, macro AF,
	manual with centre-magnification
VIEWFINDER:	None
MONITOR:	2.5inch 207,000 pixel TFT
CONNECTION:	USB, DC, AV
FILE:	JPEG, TIFF, RAW
VIDEO OUTPUT:	NTSC, Pal
POWER:	Li-Ion cell
STORAGE:	SD
OTHER:	Optical Image Stabilisation
DIMENSIONS:	106x56x25.5mm
WEIGHT:	185g

image quality

Higher pixel counts do not always guarantee better results. As the pixels become smaller, so they gather less light compared with lower-resolution models. Less light means the likelihood of slightly higher noise levels. The LX1 controls noise pretty well, although in lower lighting the image does start to break down a little when magnified to its full extent. Meanwhile the Leica lens delivers excellent optical resolution with little or no distortion except at wideangle with very close shots and with the format set to the 16:9 aspect ratio – ie when the angle of cover is at its widest.

see more on the web

Download our PANASONIC LX1 test images on our website

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as you don't have to delve into menus for every single function. I found myself using the aspect ratio and focus switches in particular more than I certainly would have done had they been hidden in a menu. This allows for using the aspect ratio to help you define the composition and vice-versa. OK you could leave the camera permanently in 16:9 format and crop afterwards, but the increased file size would inevitably restrict the number of images you could shoot on a single memory card and also slow you down slightly in image storage terms.

'You don't have to delve into menus for every single function'

Generally the LX1 is very speedy in terms of its image processing and general operation. When switched on the lens zips smoothly out to its 28mm position and is quiet and smooth at all points from 28mm and 112mm.

In performance terms there is an unexpected effect of the aspect ratio switching – it seems to affect the camera's exposure system. As there is less top and bottom in the scene, the area metering might be more likely to give a slightly darker result than the 4:3 or 3:2 images. The focusing system is very positive in all modes; manual focusing in particular is a doddle to use.

VERDICT

This is an excellent camera in so many ways it is difficult to find a weak spot. It's got one of the fullest specifications on every level that I can recall outside of top-end professional SLRs. Its handling, despite this broad specification, is essentially pretty simple and the performance shows no obvious problems. Add in a nice design, good build quality and, with a more sensible price, you may just have a winner. WDC

scores

PROS: Fully featured, unique CCD-format, all-round stonker

CONS: Noise can be an issue with such small pixel sites at over ISO 100, expensive

features	19
ease of use	16
image quality	17
design	17
value	16

85%

HP PHOTOSMART R817

quick view

PRICE £250

- **SENSOR** Total 5.31MP, Effective 5.1MP
- **LENS** 36-180mm f/2.8-4.7
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 15-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M, A, S, P, Auto, Scene
- **FLASH** 3.8-8m
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** None/ 2inch 153,000 pixel
- **OTHER** Real Life Technologies, SD, JPEG, PictBridge
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 91 x 30 x 57mm/190g

5 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

top

There's a separate shutter release button and video button, with scene mode access on the left

front

The 'wave' guides your fingers to a comfortable hold

side

Not the slimmest model on the market, but still easily fits in a pocket

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buying guide

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HP Photosmart R817

The R817 is a doddle to use, thanks to HP's innovative Real Life Technologies. **Jamie Harrison** checks it out

In the past there has been a marked difference between the Japanese- and the US-designed compact cameras. The Yanks have a reputation for liking big products, be it fridges, cars or buildings. The Japanese have a natural yen for miniaturisation. In the camera world, this has also been true, and both Kodak and HP have produced some truly ugly cameras. Things are changing though, and both companies have started to produce some rather attractive and small digicams in the past couple of years. For HP, the turning point came with the R707 last year, and we have seen a succession of cameras recently that continue the new design ethos.

The R817 is the latest and greatest in the range. It follows the R707's wave design, with a contoured fascia that allows the hand to comfortably curl around the right side. The camera is small and flat, with a smooth aluminium casing that has now been to extended to cover the back plate too. The R707 had a soft-touch outer shell, which I preferred, because it allowed better grip. The new model feels slightly more slippery, and is more prone to fingerprints spoiling the finish. That said, it still feels comfortable and certainly looks very smart.

It is thicker than many of the current slim-line lifestyle-type cameras, which I don't think is a bad thing – it's nice to have some substance in a camera, and this is reflected in the camera's solid feel and reassuring weight.

There's more to the camera than its design, though. Like Kodak, HP has an easy-to-use ethos and has spent a lot of energy in simplifying the camera. As digital cameras have become a mass market commodity, simplicity is very important – my mum doesn't want to know about apertures, or why her pictures are dark, she just wants to take pictures and print them. These cameras have to just work. In the case of digital imaging though, making a simple camera is quite complicated. HP introduced its Real Life technologies last year, and we were so impressed, the company won our Innovation award, and other manufacturers are starting to incorporate similar technology. The R817 still has that technology, which has been extended and refined.

Among the earliest of the Real Life set was Applied Lighting Technology, first introduced as 'digital flash' on the Photosmart 945, but quickly renamed. ALT is a way of balancing extreme differences in lighting, for example for backlit subjects. It automatically lifts shadow or underexposed areas, and reduces overexposed areas, similar to Photoshop's Highlight and Shadow tool, but it does so in-camera and it works quite well.

Red-eye has long been a problem with flash pictures. Attempts to solve the problem in the past have been unsatisfactory, particularly flash-based red-eye reduction, which uses a series of pre-flashes and slows down operation, as well as being very obtrusive. HP still offers that, but also has red-eye removal, again in camera, which recognises the red areas and turns them black.

Other features within the Real Life package include automatic Panoramic stitching and composition which is useful, especially for non-PC-based printing. There's also a comprehensive Help system called Image Advice. With this activated, the camera will analyse your pictures and tell you what went wrong. For example it can recognise when the wrong White Balance is used, or when the picture is under

MENU
Most of the camera controls are found in here, including the Real Life Technologies and the ability to add email addresses

ZOOM ROCKER
A nice curved design that fits naturally to the thumb with enough space to avoid other controls

image quality

Image quality is eminently suitable for 6x4in prints. An ISO of 200 brings some noise, which is more intrusive at ISO400. Colour balance is geared towards the consumer, with a warmer tone than neutral and healthy skin tones. Sharpness is very good: the Pentax lens works well with the sharpening algorithms of the camera to produce sharp but not obviously sharpened pictures. The flash, especially in fill situations, can sometimes lead to bleached faces, but mid-range indoors works very well. This is aided by the ALT which helps to reduce contrast and bring detail in dark backgrounds. Video sound recording is poor, though.

see more on the web

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or overexposed. It's a bit like those error stickers that Photo-labs use. The final new addition to the package is the ability to review video frame by frame and take stills direct from the movie, which can then be printed. They are low-res images, with some degree of pixellation and size limitations, but the option is still there.

> 'The HP will analyse your pictures and tell you what went wrong'

Other specifications include the 5MP sensor, continued from the R707, and the new addition of a 5x Pentax lens, with a useful equivalent focal length of 36-180mm. There's a full range of exposure modes, including Manual, Shutter Priority AE and Aperture Priority AE modes, as well as a fairly comprehensive set of scene modes. Impressively for a small consumer compact, the camera even has a Manual focus mode, which uses an enlarged central portion of the 2in LCD screen and the up and down navigation keys to refine the focus – very useful in macro mode. Sharing is easy too: the camera can be used with a dock, with options to automatically transfer images to the PC when it is connected, while email addresses can be tagged to the images, and images automatically emailed via the PC. PictBridge compatibility is included for easy printing.

VERDICT

HP is really starting to produce some decent cameras. The specifications and features of the camera make it quite an attractive option for the first-time buyer, if the camera's design is to your taste. It's not the cheapest 5MP camera on the market, but the extra length of the lens, and the sheer ease of use, does make it good value for money. WDC

specifications

MANUFACTURER:	HP
MODEL:	Photosmart R817
PRICE:	£250
CCD:	1/2.5-inch 5.1 MP effective/5.3MP total/ 2048x1536 pixels max
MAX PRINT SIZE:	10.24 x 7.68-inch at 200dpi
LENS:	5.8-29mm f2.8-4.7 Pentax (35mm equ 36-180mm)
SHUTTER SPEEDS:	15-1/2000sec
ISO:	Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXP MODES:	Auto, M,A,S,P 9 scene modes, Movie
FLASH:	ISO 100 equ 3.8-8m
DRIVE MODES:	Single, burst,
METER:	TTL, spot, centre-weighted, average,±3EV with bracketing
WHITE BALANCE:	Auto, 4 preset, manual
FOCUS:	Single-shot AF , Manual focus, macro 3cm min
VIEWFINDER:	None
MONITOR:	2.0-inch TFT LCD, 153,600 pixels
CONNECTION:	USB 2.0, AV, DC, Optional dock
REC FORMAT:	Jpeg, MPEG-1, DCF 2.0, DPOF 1.1, Exif 2.2
FILE SUPPORT:	Pictbridge, DCF 2.0, DPOF 1.1, Exif 2.2
VIDEO OUTPUT:	NTSC, Pal
POWER:	Lithium Ion
STORAGE:	SD, 32MB Internal
OTHER:	ALT, Panoramic stitch, in-camera red eye removal, Image Advice
DIMENSIONS:	91 x 30 x 57 mm
WEIGHT:	190g

scores

PROS: Good feature set, easy to use, value for money

CONS: Noise at ISO 200 plus, video mode, easily spoiled metal finish

features	18
ease of use	18
image quality	17
design	16
value	17

86%

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Rezo 10

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Rezo 60

STRETCH DIGITAL

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Joanne Carter, Technical Consultant, Which Camera? Magazine, January 2004

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KONICA MINOLTA DIMAGE X1

quick view

PRICE £299

- **SENSOR** 1/1.8inch CCD (Total 8.3MP, Effective 8.0MP)
- **LENS** 7.7-23.1 (37-111mm equiv) f/3.5-3.8
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1-1/1250sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P +7 scene
- **FLASH** Auto plus 5
- **ISO** Auto, 50-200 (Auto 50-160)
- **MONITOR** None/2.5inch 115,000 pixel TFT
- **OTHER** 640x480 pixel, 30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Lithium-ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 95 x 68 x 19.5mm/135g

8 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

top

The mode switch on the top-plate allows you to select still mode (program) still mode (scene) or movie shooting mode

front

A rotary sliding panel flicks over the lens when the camera is switched off

side

There's a sliding door that gives access to an SD card slot and a battery slot that are side by side in this impossibly slim camera

up against

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FUJIFILM Z1

£240

scores

PROS: Anti-Shake, Image size, LCD size

CONS: Slow in review mode

features	17
ease of use	17
image quality	17
design	18
value	17

86%

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Konica Minolta DiMAGE X1

The X1 is sleek, skinny and boasts 8MP. **Joël Lacey** tests it

Konica Minolta's unique Anti-Shake system might seem best suited to those megazoom models that it has hitherto appeared on. However, its application to an 8MP pocketable compact is interesting (and indeed required) thanks to two separate factors: the high resolution and the body form of the camera. Thin and small cameras are harder to hold two-handed as there is simply nowhere to put the second hand.

As well as the Anti-Shake system, which is different to other optical image stabilisers in that it moves the CCD to compensate for the user's movement, the X1 has an 8.1MP chip, a Video AF system that (in Supermacro mode) gets you as close as about 8cm from the front of the camera. The lens is a periscopic 3x zoom whose movement is entirely internal and has a near-unchanging maximum aperture range of f/3.5-5.6.

The camera's sensitivity range is ISO 50-200 though in Auto it goes no higher than ISO 160, indicating perhaps that the camera's chip delivers images that would be too noisy at higher sensitivity levels. In any case, the Anti-Shake system is there to ensure that you don't need to increase the signal's gain in order to get sharply captured pictures.

In handling terms there are relatively few buttons on the camera, which, given how much of it is taken up by the 2.5inch LCD, is probably no bad thing. This means that perhaps more than usual of the functions are accessed by the menus. A case in point is the separate Macro mode rather than a button push system like most digicams have. This inevitably slows things down a touch for photographers who want to take a little more control of their image capture.

Otherwise, in handling terms, the X1 is pretty impressive. Even though there are nine buttons clustered together and even with my one-inch-wide thumb I was able to select the button I wanted without error thanks to their shaping. In terms of speed, the fact that the anti-shake system has to get its head around how much you are moving means it is a little slower to respond than some other cameras, and the sheer size of the images means that image processing is also a little slower. But this is merely something you notice when you test cameras all the time.

In performance terms the Video AF is pretty nippy, though it gets confused by misty subjects at infinity.

Now to image quality. Like all cameras, this one performs better in bright light than in lower lighting levels. The Anti-Shake system is good, but it will only compensate for so much shake. Image quality as a whole was like a much improved little girl with a little curl. When the X1 is good it's very, very good, and when it is bad it's not that bad at all.

VERDICT

The X1 is widely available in Silver or Red (a nice claret) and in a Japanned black from Jessops. For £300 you get phenomenally high resolution and a bundle of other features to boot. It's pretty easy to use as long as you don't want to use it like an SLR and it's also a good camera. **WDC**

NAVIGATOR
A nine-button cluster has a four-way controller and OK button at its centre, with rec/play mode, display option, menu and flash control buttons at the 45°, 135°, 225° and 315° positions

ZOOM ROCKER
The zoom control rocker switch engages first the optical zoom and then, if enabled, the 8x digital zoom comes into effect

OLYMPUS CAMEDIA FE-5500

quick view

PRICE £230

- **CCD** 1/2.5" 4.9MP effective/5.3MP Total
- **LENS** 35 – 105mm f2.8-4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 2 – 1/2000 sec
- **ISO** A, 80, 100, 200, 400, 800 (1.8MP)
- **EXPOSURE MODES** A, 8 scene
- **FLASH** 3.5m(W) / 5m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** None/ 2.0-inch TFT 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** xD, PictBridge, 14MB internal memory
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 94 x 61 x 24mm/175g

5 mega pixels

top

A simple and uncluttered layout with just the power button and shutter release button

front

This shows the lens extended. When closed the lens opening swivels to the top

side

The camera is fairly slim, which is why the lens elements need to split to fit inside the body

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CASIO EX-Z57

£220

scores

PROS: Easy to use, good for snapshots

CONS: Uninspiring, fringing, cold colours

features	16
ease of use	18
image quality	16
design	16
value	16

82%

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Olympus Camedia FE-5500

Jamie Harrison tests the FE-5500, a camera with a twist

With the massive range of digital compacts around, especially in the 5MP 3x zoom arena, manufacturers have to keep coming up with more ways to make sure their cameras catch your eye. This has seen an explosion in the so-called 'lifestyle' or 'style' cameras, kick started by the Canon IXUS. Other ways to capture your interest is to take a conventional design and add a twist. In the case of the FE-5500, Olympus has taken that idea literally.

When you press the small power switch on the top of the camera, the lens extracts from the body with a twist from the top of the lens plate to the bottom. This is in order to keep the lens slim, the elements separate from the standard linear array when the lens is closed, and realign when the lens is extended. Of course other manufacturers, notably Pentax, have used similar systems, just without the groovy visual spin.

In many other respects, the camera's specifications are pretty standard; the 3x zoom lens offers a focal length with the equivalent of 35-105mm, and of course there's the 5MP CCD.

Exposure settings are limited to automatic options, including a selection of 8 scene modes, with metering provided by Olympus iESP system. There's no viewfinder so images have to be composed on the large 2in screen, which is reasonably bright, and just about visible in very bright sunlight.

This camera really is a doddle to use, with a remarkable lack of buttons, and a nice uncluttered interface. The functions hidden within the camera come complete with short descriptions, and the whole system is very straightforward. Similarly the menu system, which follows the standard Olympus format, is simple to follow and access. For anyone who just wants to take some pictures of their holiday or family, without the need to learn too much or fiddle about, the Olympus FE-5500 is a good starting point.

The images from the camera aren't bad, but then they're not exactly outstanding either. There's some fringing in bright light around highlights and bright areas, and colour is a little on the cold side, particularly some skin tones.

Exposures are generally good, and sharpness is reasonable. However, the lack of an optical viewfinder can lead to some camera shake, even in relatively bright light.

VERDICT

Apart from the interesting lens construction, the FE-5500 is a rather average entry-level camera. Neither bad nor particularly good, it's a decent snapper, but hardly gets the creative juices running. **WDC**

LCD AND MENU
The 2inch screen is clear and bright while the Olympus menu should be familiar to previous owners. A simple system

EXTERIOR CONTROLS
In short, there's not many, the FE-5500 is simplification personified so is ideal for the family snapper and technophobe

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SAMSUNG DIGIMAX i5

quick view

PRICE £250

- **CCD** 1/2.5" 5MP effect/5.1 Total
- **LENS** 39– 117mm f3.5-4.5
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 16– 1/2000 sec
- **ISO** A, 100. 200, 400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** A, M, 11 scene
- **FLASH** 0.2m –2.4m (W) / 0.3-1.9m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** n/a/ 2.5-inch TFT 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 30fps movie with stabilizer
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 89.6x59.8x17.3mm/133g

5 mega pixels

scores

PROS: Fast start-up, feature set

CONS: Over-complicated menu

features	17
ease of use	16
image quality	16
design	17
value	16

82%

Samsung Digimax i5

Samsung's i5 comes under **Hannah Bouckley**'s scrutiny

The i5 is one of a new range of compacts from Samsung. Constructed from metal, it is about the size of a pack of cards and similar to the Nikon S1 and Konica Minolta X1.

As lens movement is contained within the body, start-up is a quick 1.5seconds, and the thumb-operated zoom takes about 2 seconds to extend fully. The i5 boasts a 2.5in LCD, and photos captured at maximum image size of 2592x1944 can produce 13x9.7in prints.

Employing a TTL auto-focus system, weighted to the centre of the screen, its focus speeds are fairly quick, although it would be useful to have more variety over the area that is selected. It can focus as close as 5cm in macro mode and 1cm in Super Macro mode, producing pleasing results.

The menu is over-complicated; hit the left and right buttons to move through a selection of icons at the top of the screen. Unfortunately you don't know what option you are selecting until you get there.

In Manual mode adjustments can be made to white balance, sensitivity and colour channels, by hitting the +/- button. You can change the aperture and shutter speed by selecting Night Scene from 1-16 seconds and choosing from an aperture of f/3.5 and f/6.3. There is a wide selection of scene modes including portrait, children and text recognition.

Safety Flash is a useful feature: it is designed to brighten images in low-light situations when a flash is too bright. Colours are vibrant, though fringing is evident in super-macro mode at wide apertures. Slight noise is evident at ISO 100, becoming very obvious at ISO 400.

VERDICT

The i5 is an attractive, well-featured compact with some neat features, but newcomers to digital photography may find the menu systems difficult. **WDC**

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KODAK EASYSHARE V530

quick view

PRICE £249.99

- **CCD** 1/2.5" 5MP effective/5.36 Total
- **LENS** 36-108mm f2.8-4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 8 - 1/448 sec
- **ISO** A, 80, 100, 200, 400, 800 (1.8MP)
- **EXPOSURE MODES** A, 20 scene
- **FLASH** 0.6m –2.8m (W) / 1.9 (T)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** n/a/ 2.0-inch TFT 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 5 colour modes, 16Mb internal memory
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 92 x 50 x 22mm/130g

5 mega pixels

Kodak Easyshare V530

Hannah Bouckley looks at this sleek 5MP contender

The V530 is one of the newest additions to Kodak's EasyShare range; it is certainly attractive with a brushed metal front and a convenient pocket size.

It is lightweight and comfortable to hold. The 2inch LCD screen is a good size, although I had real problems being able to see anything through it in bright sunlight. As there isn't a viewfinder either, this makes it very difficult to compose pictures.

In common with some other Kodak cameras, the four-way controller is located at the left, thus controlled using the left hand; a slightly unusual choice, as most people are right handed. Turn the camera on by hitting the Still image, Movie or Favourites buttons that are situated on the top, or by pressing the On/Off button. It takes about two seconds for the Schneider Kreuznach lens (36-108mm) to extend before you can take a photo. The large shutter release button doesn't exhibit lag, though the optical zoom takes a laborious three seconds to extend to telephoto position and there is no way of deactivating the digital zoom. You can capture up to five pictures before the buffer memory becomes full, then shoot single images as it clears.

As with many point and shoot compacts, manual features are limited. Sensitivity can be adjusted from ISO 80 to 800 (though images are restricted to 1.8MP at this level). Noise is evident at ISO 200, however it only spoils the scene at ISO 400 and 800.

The V530 takes images 2576x1932 pixels in size and you can also choose to take photos 4.4, 4.0, 3.1 and 1.8MP in size. Four preset white balance settings (along with auto) feature, along with adjustable colour mode, sharpness and metering, all of which are accessed through the user-friendly menu system. You can't adjust the aperture manually, but long time exposure enables you to select a slow shutter from 0.5 to 8secs and you can access a fast shutter in sport mode.

Choose from single or continuous focusing, which is restricted to central and multiple zones. Autofocusing is for the most part accurate, though not as quick or precise as some rival models. Happily, an AF assist lamp aids focusing in low-light conditions. Macro mode can focus as close as 5cm at wide angle.

The 20 scene modes include night portrait, landscape, beach, children and sunset. Meanwhile the continuous shooting mode can take five pictures at 2.5fps and can capture up to 80 minutes of 640x480 30fps VGA movies, enabling use of the optical zoom.

Photos produced by the V530 are pleasing: skin tones are accurate and it can produce very vivid colours, though occasionally they appear over saturated. Purple fringing also appears in high-contrast situations and it often overexposes tricky scenes.

VERDICT

Marrying ease of use with an impressive selection of scene modes and selectable manual features, the Kodak V530 is a decent entry into the point-and-shoot market. However the LCD screen's performance in bright sunlight lets the camera down. **WDC**

NAVIGATOR
Press the up arrow to view a live histogram of access information about the shot; the left and right arrows adjust exposure compensation; and the down arrow activates macro and infinity shooting modes

SHARE BUTTON
Hit the share button to designate images you want to print or email

top

Adjacent to the large shutter lie the flash, power button and the still photo, movie and favourites modes

front

The internal flash, AF illuminator and microphone are located on the front of the V530

side

Unfortunately there is no door covering the DC connector, leaving it exposed to dirt and dust

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

PANASONIC FX8

£250

scores

PROS: Plentiful scene modes

CONS: Slow optical zoom, poor LCD performance in bright light

features	17
ease of use	16
image quality	17
design	16
value	17

83%

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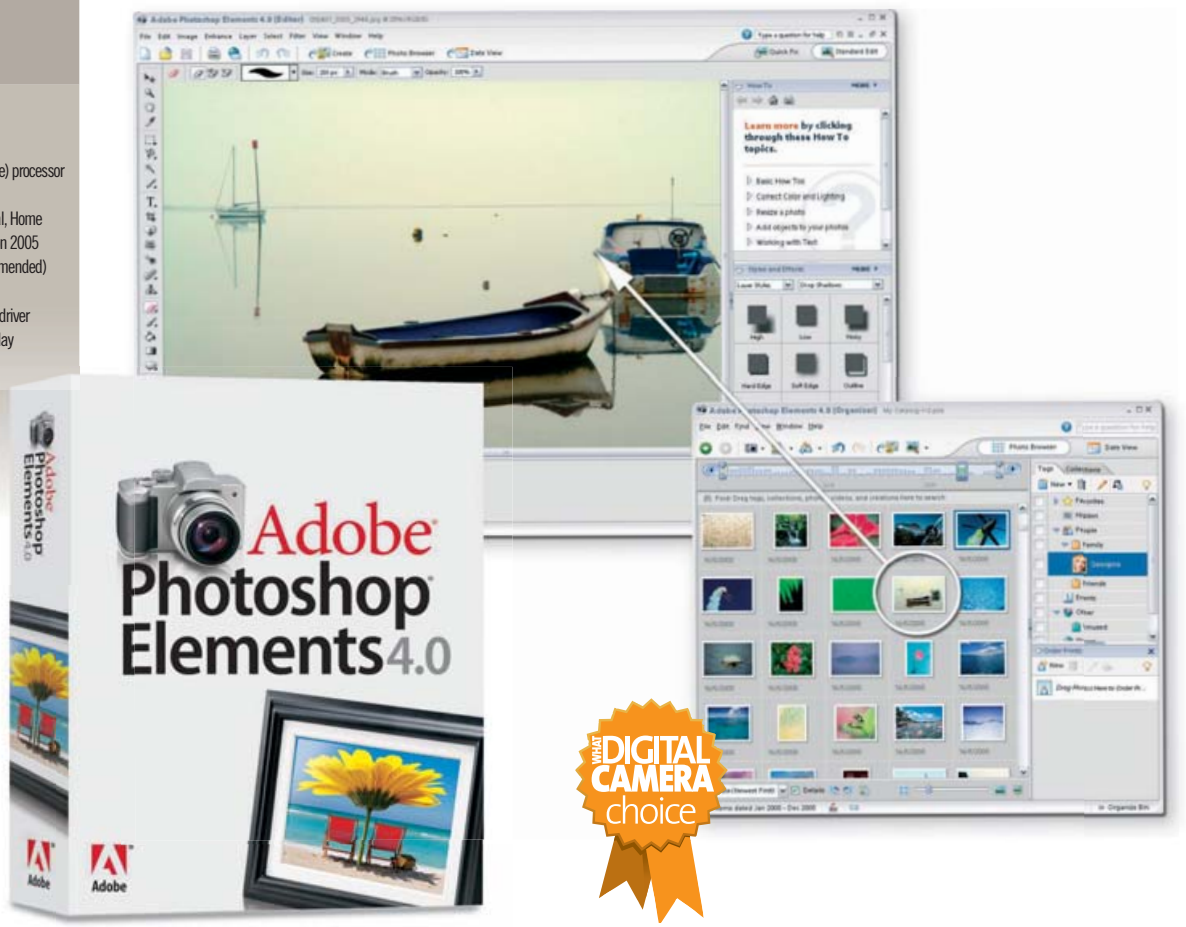
600MB of available hard-disk space
Microsoft DirectX 9 compatible display driver
1,024x768 16-bit (XGA) or greater display
CD-ROM drive



Photoshop Elements 4.0

scores

PROS: Great new features; All the good bits from Photoshop without the hefty cost

CONS: Not released in Macintosh format; The multiple workspace approach can seem confusing for new users

features	18
ease of use	17
performance	17
design	17
value	19

88%

Philip Andrews takes a first look at changes in Adobe's new release of Photoshop Elements 4.0 and asks what more could they cram into this already extensive product

It seemed only yesterday that I was singing the praises of Adobe's version 3.0 release of Photoshop Elements. After all, the revision was a major step forward in the life of the product with the inclusion of RAW file conversion options, sophisticated image organisation and management tools as well as a whole bunch of automated project creation features. For Elements 2.0 users this was definitely a 'must have' upgrade. But a little over a year later and Adobe is releasing another version of its best-selling entry level photo-editing program. Could this version be as earth shattering for Elements users as the previous release?

Given the sheer magnitude of the alterations that occurred between versions 2.0 and 3.0, it would be almost impossible for Adobe to maintain the same rate of change with ensuing releases. Instead what the company has chosen to do in 4.0 is add in a bunch of new technologies that extend the abilities of the program and also refine the integrated management and editing workflow that it established in version 3.0.

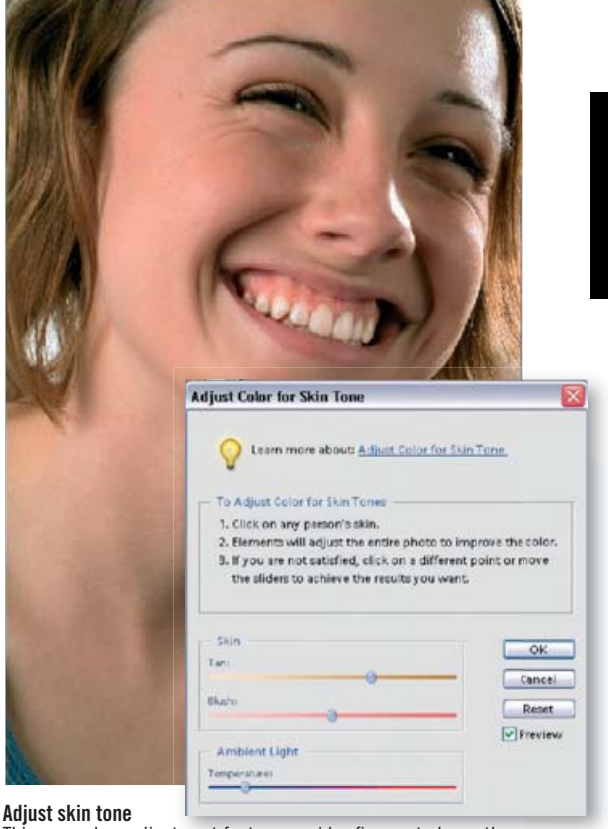
NEW FEATURES

In the new technologies camp be sure to look out for two great tools – the Magic Selection Brush and the Magic Extractor. The new selection brush generates selections from a series of scribbles or dots drawn onto the picture surface. Refining the selection results is as simple as adding extra scribbles to include more picture areas or switching the tool to the Indicate Background mode and drawing over the parts to remove.

Also new to Photoshop Elements 4.0 is the Magic Extractor feature, which quickly removes the background of a picture while retaining the subject in the foreground. Like the Magic Selection Brush, the Magic Extractor works by marking, with a scribbled line or a series of dots, the foreground (to be kept) and the background (to be removed) parts of the picture. Elements then automatically finds all the background parts in the picture and removes them from the document, filling the space with your choice of black, grey, white or transparency.

Add to these a new cool 'drag and drop' online printing option that automatically orders selected photos for printing and posting to a selected group of family and friends, the ability to correct red-eye automatically as your photos are being downloaded from your camera, a dedicated skin tone adjustment feature to help get the colour in your portraits just right, and a special face finding and tagging technology designed to help you sort and label your photos more efficiently.

There are also several cross-over features as Photoshop and Elements continue to share their base editing and enhancement tools. Version 4.0 sees the in-


Adjust Color for Skin Tone
Learn more about Adjust Color for Skin Tone
To Adjust Color for Skin Tones
1. Click on any person's skin.
2. Elements will adjust the entire photo to improve the color.
3. If you are not satisfied, click on a different point or move the sliders to achieve the results you want.
Skin
Tan
Blush
Ambient Light
Temperature
OK
Cancel
Reset
Preview

Adjust skin tone
This new colour adjustment feature provides fine control over the way that skin tones appear in your photos

clusion of a Defringe feature, adds the Remove JPEG artefact option into the Reduce Noise filter, borrows the straighten tool technology from latest edition of Adobe Camera Raw, and also incorporates a paragraph type mode and the WYSIWYG font previews first released in Photoshop CS2.

REVAMPED OLD FAVOURITES

A new release is also a great chance to put some spice into features that have become crowd pleasers in previous editions. So in Elements 4.0 the Slide Show editor gets the full makeover treatment. Along with the standard sequencing and transitions options that you would expect in a presentation utility the revised feature now includes the ability to add text, graphics, narration, a music sound track and sophisticated 'pan and zoom' effects to your presentations. Along with a completely new dialogue, the feature now boasts more output options than

'The crowd-pleasing Slide Show editor gets the full makeover treatment...'

ever. You can save the presentation as a file, burn it to disk (CD or DVD if you have Premier Elements installed), email the show in a web ready form or even send it directly to your television (if you are running Windows Media Centre 2005).

The colour management options have also received the treatment with new and easier to understand colour settings and the option to change the profile attached to your photo between print (AdobeRGB) and screen (sRGB) standards. This is a welcome upgrade that will provide profile-savvy users with much more control over the way that colour is handled throughout the program.

VERDICT

For my money Photoshop Elements is still a hidden gem in the world of photo-editing software. What other program offers the digital photographer much of the power of Photoshop for about one fifth of the price? In version 4.0 Adobe continues to forge ahead with the development of the program, including exciting and very usable new features as well as upgrading and extending the existing options. WDC

WHERE'S THE *MACINTOSH VERSION?*

Unlike previous versions of the product, Photoshop Elements 4.0 is a Windows only release. At the time of going to press Adobe wouldn't be drawn on what the future will hold for the Macintosh version of the program, but for what it is worth, we at WDC would deem it a real shame if Mac users didn't get the chance to continue to use this great editing product. But for the moment all we can do is wait and see.

5 Photoshop Elements 4.0 features *that will make CS2 users jealous!*

1 Completely revised Slide Show editor

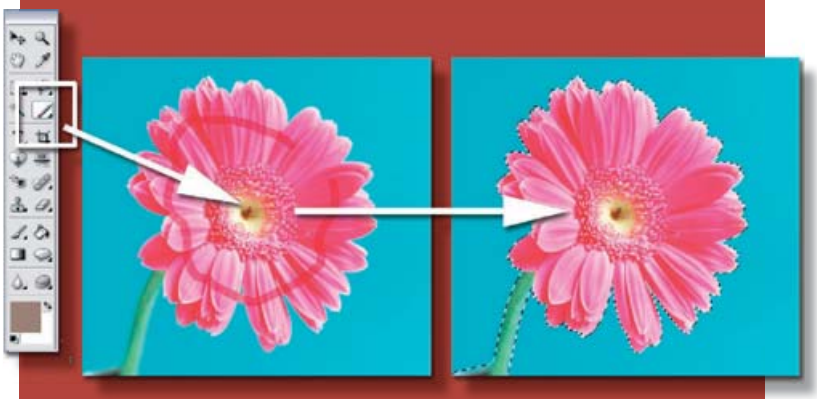
No this is not just an option to output your photos as a simple PDF presentation; in Elements 4.0 you can add 'pan and zoom effects', a music sound track as well as your own narration, title slides, add graphics, and quickly and easily visually reorder the sequence of your photos. With the presentation finished you can optimise for email, web, VCD or even DVD (with Premier Elements installed) delivery.

2 On the fly Red Eye correction

Select the Automatically Fix Red Eye option in any of the Add Photos dialogues, and Photoshop Elements 4.0 finds the photos that have been taken with flash (via settings in the associated metadata) and then locates and corrects any appearance of red eye in the picture. And this happens as the files are downloading.

3 Magical selection with a few strokes

This release introduces a new way of creating complex selections using nothing more than a few scribbles or painted dots. The Magic Selection Brush tool creates amazingly accurate selections by the user drawing on the areas of the picture that they want to include. Elements then analyses the colour, texture and tone of the picture part and creates a selection based on these factors. It is possible to fine tune the results by adding extra painted areas or remove unwanted sections in the same way.



4 Auto face tagging

– Elements users already have extensive tagging and labelling options but this release adds extra power by providing a way of automatically locating faces in your pictures. The Find Faces for Tagging option finds and displays all the faces in a group of photos in a new dialogue, ready for speedy tagging.

5 Getting skin tones just right

One of the trickiest tasks for any photographer is colour balancing their photos, especially when it comes to making skin tones look natural. Too often you know that the colour is not quite right but correcting the hue so that it looks 'normal' is not as easy as it seems. The new Adjust Colour for Skin Tone feature contains three specialised sliders designed for isolating and finetuning the appearance of skin tones in your photo.

PRICE £99

TYPE Photo editing Suite with organiser
FORMAT PC
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Intel® Pentium® III or 4 (or compatible) processor at 500MHz (1GB recommended)
Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional, Home (Recommended), 2000
256MB of RAM (512MB or more recommended)
500MB of available hard-disk space
Microsoft DirectX 9 compatible display driver
1,024x768 16-bit (XGA) or greater display
CD-ROM drive

Paint Shop Pro X

Corel has updated Paintshop Pro, adding a host of useful features for digital photographers, finds **Vincent Oliver**

scores

PROS: Excellent tools, Cost, Learning centre, Photo Album 6, B/W & Infrared filters

CONS: Too much emphasis on automated adjustments, Browser performance, Obvious application bugs which should have been spotted

features	18
ease of use	17
performance	16
design	18
value	18

87%

This is Corel's first release of Paint Shop Pro since it acquired JASC a year ago. The PSP interface has been given a face lift; at long last Paint Shop Pro is beginning to shake off a shareware look. Paint Shop Pro X also boasts many new features specifically for the digital photographer and at a price point that would make it seem a bargain.

INTERFACE FEATURES

On launching Paint Shop Pro you are presented with an easy to follow interface. On the left-hand edge is the Learning Centre, which provides a step-by-step guide to opening, manipulating, and printing your images. When you select any editing tool the Learning Centre displays tips on how to use it – clever stuff.

The first step is to browse for an image; PSP provides a built-in browser which is displayed by default at the bottom of the screen. As the thumbnails are displayed quite small and it's generally awkward to navigate to other folders, it's better to drag the Browser palette out of the bottom position and place it on the desktop, at least while looking for images. Set the thumbnail size via a zoom slider to the required viewing size. The browser displays the folders hierarchy on the left and thumbnails on the right, just double click or drag an image onto the desktop to open. Once opened there is an option to close the browser automatically (via the Preferences). In this release of PSP X this function didn't work. Another small bug is that the navigation bars in the browser tended to lock – the only way out was to close it and restart the browser.

Using a screen display of 1024 x 768 leaves the work area cluttered, with very little room for manipulating photographs. Fortunately, you can customise just about every aspect of the interface, from showing icons to creating your own toolbars. Closing the Learning Centre frees up nearly 25% of the screen area. The palettes can be docked on the edge and can also be set to Auto Hide. A much better practice is to memorise the unique keystrokes to activate the required palettes.

NEW PHOTO FEATURES

If you have been using previous versions of PSP then it will only take you a few minutes to customise yourself with this release. Here are a few highlights.

The Smart Photo Fix automatically corrects colour, brightness, sharpness, and saturation while also giving you some control to fine-tune the settings. A makeover tool includes a Blemish Fixer, a Toothbrush (yes, for whiter than white teeth!) and a Suntan Brush.

The red-eye removal tool has been simplified to a single click, well, two clicks unless you've photographed Cyclops. This worked well, but PSP already

has an excellent red-eye removal facility which can be found in the menu – Adjust > Red Eye Removal. To simplify the removal of unwanted objects (or people), there is an Object Remover. Draw a selection over something you want to remove and then drag a source box over your selection (for size). Now move the selection box over an area you want to sample and press the Apply button. This tool was a bit hit and miss depending on the subject matter, but when it works, it works well.

The One Step Purple Fringe Fix was simple enough to apply, but it didn't fix the problem on the images I used. There is also a Chromatic Aberration Removal filter, but I have yet to be convinced this actually worked.

Two new filters stood out for me. The Black and White film effect simulates the effect of using traditional glass filters – Red, Green, Yellow, Orange or Blue – and produced excellent results. The channel mixer is still available for those photographers who prefer more precise control. The Infrared filter produced some of the most realistic looking effects I have seen, short of shooting with infrared film. Full user control is given to Flare, Amount, and Grain - this is a superb filter.

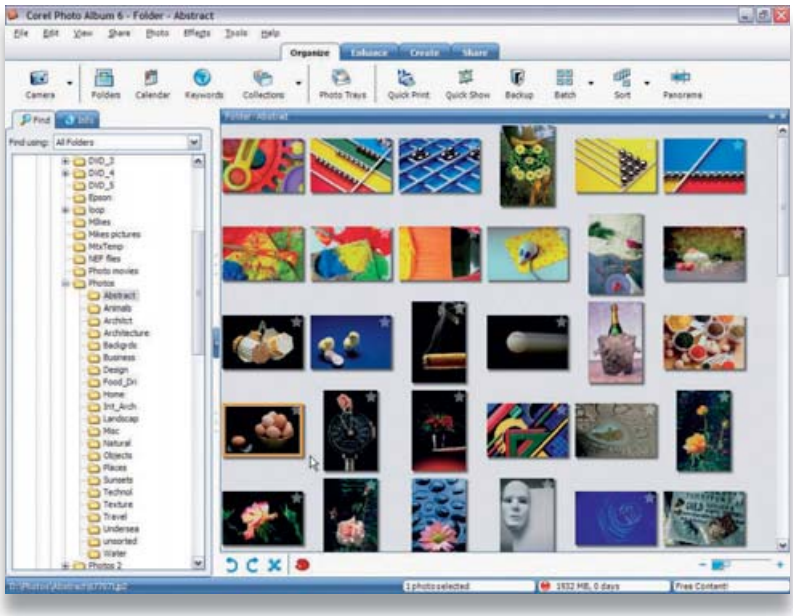
A One-Step Noise Fix is handy for removing noise from low-light shots, while maintaining a high degree of image detail. A much better option is to use the Digital Camera Noise Removal filter, which gives you precise control on the areas containing noise. This worked very well, though if overdone the image can look as though a selective Gaussian Blur has been applied.

> The Infrared filter produced some of the most realistic-looking effects...'

PSP will open RAW files and you can work with 16-bit images. All the effect filters are shown as available, but when you try to apply them you are prompted to convert the image to 8-bit colour. Corel promises regular updates to accommodate new cameras. The Browser displayed my folder of NEF files as mono images. Once opened the NEF file appeared in full colour and launched the Smart Photo Fix interface – on my NEF files the Smart Photo Fix colour was far from perfect.

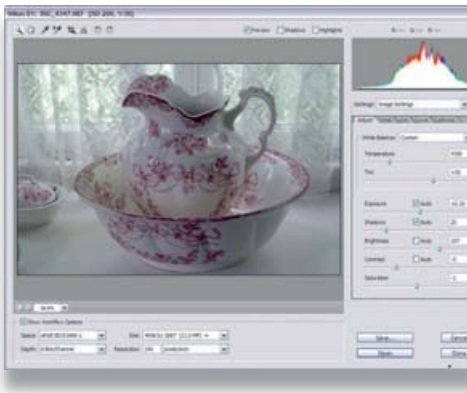
Some of the features in previous versions appear not to have been included here, like the Black and White points. In the Customise menu settings you can find Unused Commands, where you may find some old favourites. In addition, although PSP is geared up to work with EXIF metadata, the Browser does not show images rotated. However, when an image is opened it is correctly rotated – one more annoying feature of the browser.

Above: Outstanding infrared filter effects



Above: The Excellent Photo Album 6 is included with PSP X

Below: The PSP X Smart Photo Fix made a hash of my NEF Raw files (018) The same file opened in Photoshop CS2 looks more convincing.



CONCLUSION

I feel Corel has concentrated too much on auto features. Yes, there is an excellent Colour balance adjustment with automated white balance. However, more advanced photographers may want to have finer control and will still want the previous Colour Balance palette or the Manual Colour correction. You have to hunt for them in the Unused Commands section.

The browser, although good, is clumsy and sluggish even on a fast computer (you can't change the background colour as on earlier versions). The help guide gives a few tips on features which are unavailable; it says 'You can display thumbnails that look like raised button bars by unmarking the Display flat style thumbnails check box', and 'You can adjust thumbnail width and height independently, by unmarking the Symmetric check box and setting or typing values in the Width and Height controls'. Neither of these commands are in the Browser options. Hmmm.... To browse for folders you can click on the Windows Explorer button which then launches Windows own browser; this rather defeats the object of having a PSP browser. A much better solution is to launch the excellent Photo Album 6 browser, via an icon on PSP X, and select images via this interface. Perhaps it's time to abandon the PSP browser altogether.

Photo Album 6 standard edition is included. This application manages your digital images from automatically downloading them from camera, memory card, or removable media and backing up pictures to CD/DVD. I have seen many excellent image browsers over the years, but Photo Album 6 stands out as being a fast and easy to use application which recognises most image file formats (but for some reason not RAW files). As an extra bonus there are over two hours of video tutorials on Paint Shop Pro X by Lynda.com included on CD.

VERDICT

Paint Shop Pro X is loaded with useful features that will enhance and improve your digital photos with a few keystrokes. This is a very good package offering excellent value for money. However, Corel may have released this version a bit too early, as too many rough edges still need to be sorted. WDC

PRICE £400

- **TYPE:** Thermal Dye sublimation printer
- **RESOLUTION:** 301 dpi
- **MAX IMAGE SIZE:** Up to 8.27 x 12 inches
- **MEDIA CAPACITY/COST** 50 Sheets Paper, 50 Picture Units Ribbon approx £1.50 per print
- **DIMENSIONS** 24cm x 76.8cm x 43cm

Kodak Professional 1400 Digital Photo Printer

scores

PROS: Easy to use, great results

CONS: Bulky, one size paper with borders. Expensive prints

features	18
ease of use	18
image quality	18
design	17
value	18

89%

Fancy the benefits of dye-sub printing – but for A4 size, not just 6x4in? **Jamie Harrison** tests Kodak's Pro 1400

For most people, an inkjet will suffice for most of your printing needs. However, some companies offer an alternative, thermal dye sublimation. These are rapidly becoming popular as mini photo printers – for example the Canon Selphy printers and Kodak's Printer Docks – but they are also available for larger prints. The Kodak Professional 1400 is one such, and offers an A4 print in about 90 seconds via a USB 2.0 interface.

Dye sublimation doesn't use inks; a thermal ribbon is fitted within the device, and a receiver paper is fed through four times as each colour is added by the ribbon. The final layer is a clear cover, offering UV protection, water proofing and an instantly dry print.

The 1400 isn't the smallest A4 printer on the market, but is reasonably good looking and is solidly built. Noise levels are fairly high too, thanks to a fan, the paper rollers and the thermal heater. However, the speed and quality more than make up for the intrusion. Though it contains calibration software, I made prints immediately from the default driver with no trouble, within about ten minutes of unpacking the box. All my control pictures printed clearly, accurately and with very good colour and contrast. The added weight of the paper, with the high gloss finish, produces a true conventional-looking print.

This isn't a printer for all occasions, though. The size of it may be restrictive in most homes, and at around £1.50 a print, it's not necessarily cheap to run. However, because the printer packs of paper and ribbon come together at a fixed price, you know exactly how many prints you will get for your money. This differs from inkjet, which has varying prices per print according to the dominant inks which may be used. It will also only accept the larger papers, so anyone wanting 5x7in prints will need to cut them down and waste paper. The Professional tag on the printer hints at its intended market, with wedding and portrait photographers sure to find it extremely useful. You could even put it in the car boot and produce prints at events to optimise immediate sales.

VERDICT

This is an easy-to-use, easy to set up printer that produces good results, with high protection and print life. And it's a lot cheaper than previous models. WDC

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PRICE £1900

- **TYPE:** Interactive Pen Display
  Screen Size: 21.3inches
  Resolution: 1600x1200pixels
- **REQUIREMENTS:** Windows 2000/XP, Mac OS X 10.2.6 or higher
- **CONTACT DETAILS:** www.wacom.co.uk

Wacom Cintiq 21UX

Graphic tablets are excellent, but this is even more impressive, says **Jamie Harrison**

scores

PROS: Simply the easiest way to work with images

CONS: Soooo expensive

features	19
ease of use	17
performance	17
design	18
value	16

87%

If, like me, you're useless or clumsy when using a mouse for your cut outs, Wacom offers a range of alternatives. The most widely known are the tablets, which use a pen on a sort of mousemat-type tablet to replicate the screen. With this you can easily navigate your way around the screen and much more.

For the real deal though, the Cintiq offers a much more true-to-life experience. With this the pen works directly on the screen, so you can literally trace around your subject, including all the fine detail. It's also useful for painting on your pictures, or using illustration tools such as Painter or Illustrator. In addition, the pen uses pressure sensitivity to adjust brushstrokes, and allows angled strokes to be incorporated.

The new 21UX also features side control strips which can be programmed to perform keystrokes or shortcut commands, so your hands never leave the monitor and the keyboard can be left, mostly, out of the loop.

Of course the Cintiq isn't cheap. This is really a professional tool, or a rich man's toy, but it's still the best way I've found of using Photoshop. It's also the way of the future – hopefully one day we'll all have touchscreen monitors, and do away with the mouse, keyboard and Repetitive Strain Injury for good.

VERDICT

A nice monitor, with good colour, but slightly soft contrast, the Cintiq is expensive and takes a little getting used to. I still want one. WDC

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Canon Ixus 55	241.99	Minolta Dimage E500	113.99	Nikon Coolpix S2	228.99	Pentax Optio 50	115.99	Sony Cybershot DSC-W7	217.99
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Canon EOS 20D inc 18-55	1009.99	Minolta Dimage X1	252.99	Olympus IR-300	192.99	Pentax Optio S5z	207.99	Sony Cybershot DSC-V3	361.99
Casio Exilim S100	149.99	Minolta Dimage Z5	263.99	Olympus C70z Zoom	293.99	Pentax Optio SVi	207.99	Sony Cybershot DSC-H1	297.99

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www.photobox.co.uk

OFOTO
www.ofoto.co.uk

FLICKR
www.flickr.co.uk

PBASE
www.pbase.co.uk

SMUGMUG
www.smugmug.co.uk

BUZZNET
www.buzznet.co.uk

Photo Sharing Websites

Jamie Harrison investigates a very convenient way to share your photos with family and friends

So you've had your summer holidays and taken a million pictures. You print out your favourites, carefully make back-up CDs, and store the originals deep in the recesses of your hard drive. But you promised to send some to that nice couple from France you met on holiday. And there's a nagging feeling of guilt that you haven't done it, but emailing large files is a pain in the neck. But there's always a promise of a free week in their cottage in Provence, so you really ought to get a move on.

Email is great for the odd picture, but for a full set there's only one option – put them on the web. Again there's a number of options here. Build your own website, use a template-based website, or simplest of all, use a photo-sharing site.

The latter is the option I'll be reviewing in the following pages, with a review of template-based hosts to follow next month. The advantage of photo-sharing sites is in speed, cost and convenience. It won't give you a bespoke design, but it will allow you to upload your pictures and let friends, families and even the rest of the world view your pictures. You can put your portfolio online if you wish, but its best use is for everyday snaps. So now there's no excuse. »

PHOTOBOX www.photobox.co.uk

£FREE

Photobox is primarily a photo printing service, but also offers photosharing. Registration is free and the company allows you to store your photos in albums and send emails and links to your friends to view your pictures. Even better, they can then order prints for themselves, saving you time and money.

Storage space is initially limited to 50MB, but every time you order prints, add pictures or buy credits, the company gives you more space, which encourages you to continue using the service.

Image upload is easy, with the option to batch upload either by email, via a java programme in your browser, by an ebay-type browser uploader or by an ftp program. There's even mobile phone uploading. This makes it the most versatile site that I tried, although uploads can sometimes time out if you are adding large batches of pictures.

Images are stored in albums, so you store them by subject, date or whatever, and images can be viewed by thumbnailed click-to-view or slideshow. You can keep your albums private, share with friends or have them public so anybody can see them. There are Pro galleries where you could sell your best images as fine art prints.

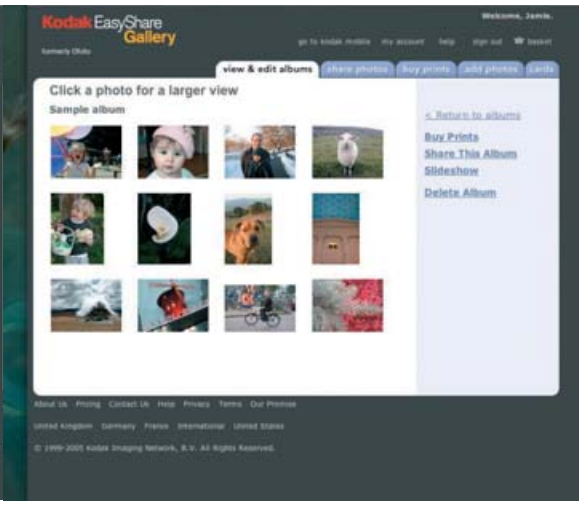
PROS: Plenty of services, free storage, multiple upload options
CONS: Guests have to register to view albums

Features	19
Performance	18
Ease of use	18
Design	17
Value	20

TOTAL 92%

OFOTO www.ofoto.co.uk

£FREE



Soon to be called kodakgallery.com, you can guess who owns this site. Like Photobox, it's also an online printing service, with sharing facilities and offers similar services, but with slightly more expensive prints.

The chief advantage is the unlimited storage space; in theory there's no reason why you can't upload gigabytes of pictures. Upload is either through the browser or, even better, by using Kodak's excellent and free Easyshare software, which will also download images from your camera to computer and let you perform basic fixes and organise your images. The software can connect directly to your ofoto page and act as a browser. Registration is free and, once set up, you can invite your friends via email to view your pictures. There's also a mobile service, for sending your pictures to a camera phone, either yours or someone else's, and you can send pictures direct from your phone.

On the downside, there are no public galleries, so you won't be able to show your pictures to the world, and similarly there's no chance to have a nose around other peoples albums. The upload options are limited too, compared to Photobox.

PROS: Eay to use, unlimited space, free
CONS: No public galleries, limited upload options

Features	17
Performance	18
Ease of use	18
Design	17
Value	20

TOTAL 90%

FLICKR www.flickr.com

£FREE

Flickr has become something of a cultural phenomenon, a strictly sharing site with the opportunity to browse other people's pictures by keyword and the ability to incorporate pictures into blogs via hyperlinks. Free accounts with a 20MB upload limit a month are available, and limitations on the amount of pictures that display, or a Pro account costs $24.95 a year.

Uploads can be done in the browser, by software available on the site or by email. You can make your galleries private, and just invite friends to view the pictures, or public and add keywords so people can search for similarly themed pictures. For example, typing in Christmas will show anything from office parties, dads dressed as Santa or kids opening presents. Public albums also allow the viewer to leave comments about the pictures.The site has a community feel, with groups and discussions covering particular areas of interests – and you can start your own.

The blogging options allow you to create a link from your blog, or include the picture into your blog as a thumbnail, which will redirect people to your flickr gallery.

There's also mobile phone uploading and browsing, as well moblogging tools.

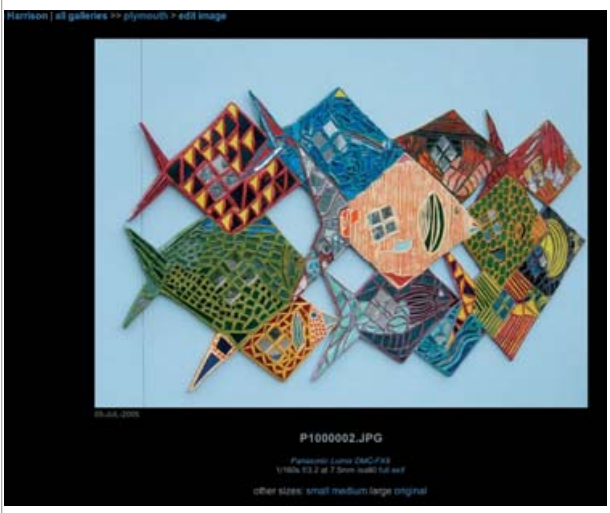
PROS: Commumity based, searchable, blogging tools
CONS: Limited upload capacity

Features	16
Performance	17
Ease of use	17
Design	17
Value	18

TOTAL 85%

« PBASE www.pbase.com

$23pa



Pbase is dedicated more to photo enthusiasts, rather than just family and friends, with some really excellent portfolios online that are well worth checking out. If you want to post your own, the site has a free trial offering 10MB of space, with full access and added features, starting at $23pa for 300MB and rising to $400pa for 6000MB.

The site is fairly easy to use, with browser uploading, including the ability to upload .zip folders, though this didn't work on my Mac. The site allows gallery building, comments to be left and a nice 'picture a day' feature, similar to a photoblog.

Like Flickr, Pbase has a real community feel to it, with forums and a downloadable magazine compiled by members. There's a camera database, with specs on many film and digital cameras, as well as links to members photos taken on those cameras. This ties in with the option to display the Exif information from cameras, so you can access the full details of aperture, shutter speed and so on, which is a nice touch.

It may not have as much functionality as some others (mobile access, blogging etc), but as somewhere to place your best work and to view the images made by enthusiasts worldwide, pbase is hard to beat.

PROS: Community based, forums, excellent photography

CONS: Lack of online tools

Features	17	TOTAL
Performance	18	
Ease of use	17	88%
Design	18	
Value	18	

SMUGMUG www.smugmug.com

$30pa

This American site offers a wide array of services from storing and sharing to printing. You can upload full res images and invite people to view galleries and order prints. You can even download the images to print on your inkjet.

Uploading is simple, with plenty of options, via dedicated ftp software, which you can load onto your computer – with even a Mac version available. There's Java and web upload options, with a new bulk uploader available. This is still in Beta stage though, and I couldn't get it to work. Even the basic package, costing $29.95 pa, allows unlimited picture storage.

The galleries are well laid out and allow you to view EXIF information, edit pictures and link pictures and galleries to forums and blogs. There's also a very active community serving people with similar interests.

There are three levels of membership, from basic up to pro, which allows you to set up galleries and sell prints, where you set the price and earn the money.

This is a very good site with something for everyone. UK users may prefer a UK based printing service, but the extras available on Smugmug are worth looking into.

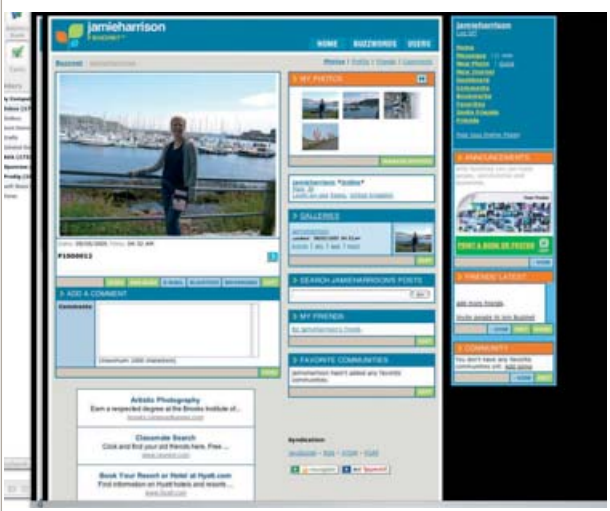
PROS: Good design, unlimited hosting, hi-res downloads

CONS: US based print services

Features	18	TOTAL
Performance	18	
Ease of use	17	88%
Design	17	
Value	18	

BUZZNET www.buzznet.com

£FREE



Like Flickr above, Buzznet uses a form of captioning to browse and find photographs. In this case it calls them buzzwords.

This is more of a community-cum-blogging website, and allows people to leave comments, as well as to make friends through the site. It also has quite a young and funky feeling to it.

To this end, it allows users to send email-type messages to each other and write an online journal. In addition, users can also add pictures to blogs, using the site's own 'myspace' service. Other blog services are also supported, included Movable Type and Blogger.

You are allowed to post up to 120 photographs a month for free, and add more for a small cost. For instance, adding an extra 100 photos costs $5, and 300 photos costs $10.

Buzznet is a little more niche and limited than some of the other services tested here, but if you like the idea of a blog or community site, this could be a good one to check out.

The upload options are a bit limited, with no opportunity to email pictures in or use a mobile, but for browser-based uploading it's fine.

PROS: Good blog tools, community based

CONS: Limited free uploads, limited upload options, slightly niche

Features	16	TOTAL
Performance	17	
Ease of use	17	85%
Design	17	
Value	18	

SIGMA

OUR WORLD

A vision of grace in a Nigerian village.
ED KASHI: Born in 1957 in New York. Earned a degree in photojournalism at Syracuse University. Photographed in more than 60 countries. Received numerous awards for a wide range of work. Photographs appeared in National Geographic magazine, among many other publications.
Shooting data: SIGMA 18-200mm F3.5-6.3 DC lens, 1/125 second exposure at f10.

ED KASHI SHOOTS THE WORLD WITH A SIGMA LENS

NEW

Using SIGMA's high-power 11.1X zoom lens on his digital SLR, the photographer brilliantly captured this serene Sunday scene. The lens image circle is specifically designed to suit the APS-C size imaging sensor of a digital SLR. Multi-layer coated SLD (special low dispersion) glass and aspheric lens elements achieve superior image quality throughout the entire zoom range by controlling flare and ghost. The lightweight and compact construction is housed within a truly remarkable streamlined lens barrel measuring 70mm/2.8 in. in diameter by 75.6mm/3in. in length and weighing just 385g/13.6oz. (in a Nikon mount). Minimum focusing distance is 45cm/17.7inches whilst maximum magnification is 1:4.4.
A high-performance inner focusing system makes this SIGMA lens particularly suitable for use with the matched petal-shaped lens hood, which is included, and circular polarizing filters.

FOR DIGITAL

Available for: Sigma SA, Canon EOS, Nikon-D and Pentax digital SLRs

The world's smallest and lightest 11.1X high-power zoom lens in its class, exclusively designed for use with digital SLRs.

SIGMA 18-200mm F3.5-6.3 DC

*Vignetting (a darkening of the corners of the image) will occur if the lens is used with digital SLR cameras with image sensors larger than APS-C size or 35mm SLRs and APS SLRs

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Look Flash

Ian Burley explores illuminating accessories for your camera

WHY YOU NEED ONE

Flash gives you two main things: light where there isn't enough and the ability to freeze action. The obvious use for flash is in dark conditions, but it's very effective where a subject is in front of the light and so shaded or silhouetted. Using flash to lighten such a shaded subject is called fill-in flash. Subtle use of flash in daylight can be used to add sparkle to an otherwise flat subject. Even in bright sunlight a flash can be a benefit, by removing contrasty shadows and brightening skin tones. Bouncing flash off a wall or ceiling can soften tones and shadows. If your subject is frantically on the move, flash will go a long way to freeze that action.

EXTRA WIDE ANGLE DIFFUSION LENS

These are increasingly popular integrated pull-out, clear, plastic diffusers that spread the light to cover super wideangle lenses. The range of the flashgun reduces as the coverage widens.

ZOOM HEAD

Concentrate the energy of your flash where it's needed when using telephoto lenses, or cover the width viewed by wideangle lenses. Most mid to high-end flash units now have motorised zooms controlled dynamically as you zoom the lens. Manual zooming can be useful too.

TWIST AND SWIVEL HEAD

Bounce the flash beam off a ceiling or wall for softer illumination.

AF ASSIST ILLUMINATION

The flash unit can supplement the camera's own AF illuminator, if present, providing more accurate autofocus at longer distances. Some flash units can illuminate wide-position AF points as well.

DEDICATED HOT SHOE

Extra contacts provide pathways for proprietary data exchange between the flash unit and the camera. This enables the use of through-the-lens metering and other camera information that can control the flash output of the camera for ideal exposures. In some models the flash tells the camera about its own information, like white balance settings.

INFORMATION DISPLAY

At its simplest, you need to know that the power of the flash is in the range that the camera's exposure setting can make use of. At its most sophisticated, you can see which exposure mode is set, what the zoom setting is, the power setting and much more. LCD displays are the way to go, but not yet universal. Make sure you can see the display in the dark!

WIRELESS SLAVE CAPABILITY

A high-end feature, this lets one flash unit control another, or even several others, sharing selected shooting data for a coherently managed portable lighting set up.

FP - FLASH AT ANY *SHUTTER SPEED*

Now a common feature in higher-specification dedicated flash units, FP mode flash enables flash photography at any shutter speed. Normally, the maximum flash-compatible shutter speed using a focal plane shutter, which most SLR cameras use, is the X-sync speed, typically between 1/60th and 1/500th second, depending on the camera. This is the shortest time that the shutter can remain fully open during the exposure. Faster shutter speeds and, therefore, reduced exposure, are then achieved by passing a variable sized slit across the sensor (or film) plane. As normal flash operation involves a very brief burst of light, only the width of the gap in the shutter will illuminate the sensor. With FP mode flash, the light is pulsed at several KHz, evenly illuminating the shutter gap as it traverses the frame, at any fast shutter speed. The cost of this sophistication is reduced flash range.

SIGMA EF-500 DG ST

£119.99

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/
GUIDE NUMBER 50m @ 105mm@ ISO 100
180 DEGREE TWIST Yes
ZOOM COVERAGE (135 f=mm) 28-105
WIDE ANGLE DIFFUSER (min f) 17mm
WIRELESS SLAVE COMPATIBILITY No
FP MODE No
COMPATIBILITY Sigma S-TTL,Canon E-TTL, KonMin ADI, Nikon i-TTL, Pentax P-TTL

Sigma has a deserved reputation for affordable alternatives to camera manufacturers' flash guns. The EF-500 DG ST is an economy model, but one of the most powerful units in this group.

That price advantage does mean some cost cutting in the specifications. This gun is the only one here without an LCD display, for example. There is no manual zoom selection, manual power is restricted to just high and low and the widest lens served without using the built-in wideangle diffuser lens is a 28mm. But Sigma has wisely kept the features that really matter, like a fully tilting and swivelling head and Nikon i-TTL compatibility. Its Canon and Minolta compatibility is comprehensive too. The EF-500 DG ST won't win any beauty contests, but it's a decent performer that is truly affordable.

SCORES		
Performance	18	TOTAL 86%
Features	16	
Build Quality	16	
Ease of use	17	
Value	19	

CANON SPEEDLITE 430EX

£199.00

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT www.canon.co.uk
GUIDE NUMBER 43m @ 105mm @ ISO100
180 DEGREE TWIST Yes
ZOOM COVERAGE (135 f=mm) 24-105
WIDE ANGLE DIFFUSER (min f) Yes(14mm)
WIRELESS SLAVE COMPATIBILITY EX-system
FP MODE Yes
SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY Canon Speedlite EX E-TTL II

The new Canon Speedlite 430EX is beautifully presented, well-made and packed with features.

The 430EX is reasonably powerful, but the power is maximised when it is used with sub-full frame sensor DSLR models as the zoom compensates to limit wasted out-of-view coverage. Besides being E-TTL II compatible, the 430EX can optimise the camera's auto white balance setting. AF assist coverage has been widened to encompass cameras with more AF points. Modelling flash, FP and wireless slave modes are included, plus custom function options. A slave stand with tripod socket is included. Performance is excellent, with even coverage and accurate illumination. Recycling time is noticeably faster compared to the old 420EX. So this is an improved 420EX, but a big price rise to match.

SCORES		
Performance	18	TOTAL 90%
Features	19	
Build Quality	19	
Ease of use	17	
Value	17	

NIKON SPEEDLIGHT SB-600

£229.99

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT www.nikon.co.uk
GUIDE NUMBER 40m @ 85mm @ ISO 100
180 DEGREE TWIST Yes
ZOOM COVERAGE (135 f=mm) 24-85
WIDEANGLE DIFFUSER (min f) Yes (14mm)
WIRELESS SLAVE COMPATIBILITY CLS
FP MODE Yes
SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY Nikon Speedlight i-TTL

Like Canon's new 430EX, the SB-600 is an all-singing and dancing premium mid-priced dedicated flash unit. It has most of its bigger and more expensive SB-800 sibling's features, but in a smaller and slightly less powerful package.

Those features include Nikon's latest lens distance-optimised i-TTL flash exposure metering, modelling flash, white balance optimisation, wireless slave mode for group unit lighting, though not master mode, FP high-speed flash sync and wide-area AF assist light. The SB-600 also has a brilliant quick-release hot shoe foot, made from alloy instead of the usual plastic, which is how these things should be produced. In use, performance is faultless. The SB-600 is as good as it gets for a dedicated intermediate power flash, but pricey.

SCORES		
Performance	18	TOTAL 90%
Features	19	
Build Quality	19	
Ease of use	18	
Value	16	

SUNPAK POWER ZOOM 40X

£159.99

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT www.intro2020.co.uk
GUIDE NUMBER 40m @ 80mm @ ISO 100
180 DEGREE TWIST No
ZOOM COVERAGE (135mm equiv) 24-80
WIDE ANGLE DIFFUSER (min f) No
WIRELESS SLAVE COMPATIBILITY No
FP MODE No
COMPATIBILITY Canon E-TTL I/II, Nikon i-TTL, D-TTL, KonicaMinolta ADI

The smallest flash gun in this group, the Sunpak Power Zoom 40X, or PZ40X for short, is a stylish unit that will suit both a DSLR or a hot shoe-equipped compact.

Despite its small size which limits it to two AA batteries, the PZ40X still manages the same power output as the Nikon SB-600, which is half as large and heavy again. Of note is the large LCD with lurid red back light. There are two control buttons, a zoom button that cycles through the available settings from 24mm to 80mm and a mode button that cycles through E-TTL or plain TTL modes and five manual power settings from full to 1/16th power. The LCD also shows a distance range bar. If only it had a swivelling head to supplement its 90° tilting action. The RRP is definitely too steep.

SCORES	
Performance	17
Features	16
Build Quality	18
Ease of use	18
Value	15

TOTAL 84%

OLYMPUS FL-36

£169.99

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT www.olympus.co.uk
GUIDE NUMBER 36m @ 85mm @ ISO 100
180 DEGREE TWIST Yes
ZOOM COVERAGE (135 f=mm) 24-85
WIDEANGLE DIFFUSER (min f) Yes (16mm)
WIRELESS SLAVE COMPATIBILITY No
FP MODE Yes
SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY Olympus 4/3 E-system

Designed exclusively for use on Olympus E-System DSLRs and hotshoe equipped Camedia-series cameras, this is the middle unit of a current family of three E-System hotshoe flash models.

Taking two AA cells or one CRV3 lithium, the FL-36 still manages an ISO 100 guide number of 36 in metres at its 42mm (85mm equivalent) zoom setting and recycling times remain fairly swift. Super FP mode is available for reduced power flash synchronisation at any shutter speed, while there's TTL flash metering, auto metering or manual. A dial allows power adjustments in auto and manual modes. A good-sized LCD shows all the information you need. Three AF assist beams project to cover the three AF points supported in the E-300, but there is no wireless group master/slave system.

SCORES	
Performance	16
Features	16
Build Quality	19
Ease of use	19
Value	16

TOTAL 86%

METZ 54 AF-1N DIGITAL

£207.96

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT www.metz.de
GUIDE NUMBER 54m @ 105mm @ ISO100
180 DEGREE TWIST No
ZOOM COVERAGE (135 f=mm) 24-105
WIDE ANGLE DIFFUSER (min f) No
WIRELESS SLAVE COMPATIBILITY No
FP MODE No
COMPATIBILITY Canon E-TTL I/II, Nikon i-TTL, KonicaMinolta ADI

Mecablitz, or Metz for short, is a great name in flash photography. The 54 AF-1N is made in Germany; the others here are made in the Far East.

It's a simple but effective design and feels very sturdy. The 54 AF-1N, in Nikon fit guise, is i-TTL compatible, so ideal for the latest Nikon DSLRs. Versions of this model are available for Canon and Konica Minolta models; Metz has a SCA dedicated module system for even more marques. The gun can only be tilted vertically and not more than perpendicularly skywards, there is no lateral tilt. The LCD display is large and clear and there are only three buttons. There is no integrated wideangle diffuser lens and while a modelling light mode is provided, there's no FP high speed sync mode. Metz offers wireless slave options on some models, but not this one.

SCORES	
Performance	18
Features	15
Build Quality	16
Ease of use	17
Value	15

TOTAL 81%

FLASH SYSTEM EVOLUTION AND LEGACY COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

You might think that a flash gun is a simple beast, but increasing sophistication over the years has forced camera manufacturers to abandon backwards compatibility in favour of feature additions and improvements.

Take Canon, for example. Its EOS SLR camera system was introduced in 1987 and featured a EZ-series Speedlight flash system employing a contemporary TTL metering system separate from the camera's normal exposure meter. This was later updated to A-TTL, which used a pre-flash light measurement. Then an all-new EX-series Speedlight system was introduced, which employed the camera's segmented zone metering system system for both flash (E-TTL) and non-flash photography. Although some Canon EOS film SLRs have maintained backwards compatibility with older TTL and A-TTL EZ-series units, EOS digital SLRs will only work in automatic E-TTL modes using more recent EX-series flash units. Since last year, Canon has further enhanced the EZ system to include focus distance information from selected lenses and this is the E-TTL 2 system. Luckily, cameras compatible with this are, so far, still compatible with the earlier E-TTL system. Nikon has a similar history of technical improvements that mean selecting a flash unit that is fully compatible with your particular camera model does require care.

Some third-party manufacturers, notably Sunpak, Metz and Sigma, do offer fairly up to date compatibility with camera manufacturers' latest flash system features, but some of the cheaper brands don't, so buyers – beware!

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Canon EOS 350D

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• Full Frame CMOS
• Professional Build

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SRP £5999.99

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• 7x L-Series lens

SRP £649.00

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• 3x optical zoom
• 2.0" Bright LCD

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Our Price
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• 3x optical zoom
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• Ultra Slim Body

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• 3x optical zoom
• Ultra Slim Body

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- A large, bright 2-inch LCD
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- 5 fps or 8fps with High Speed Cropped Mode
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- i-TTL Flash Control
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- Durable magnesium body

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Nikon D70s

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- 0.2s start up time
- Long Battery Life

SRP £699.99 lens sold separately

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- Excellent Build Quality

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- 5.1 million pixels
- 3 x optical zoom
- Ultra Slim Design

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- 3 x optical zoom
- Ultra Slim Design

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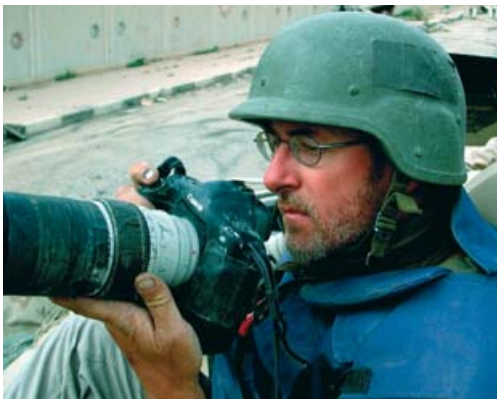
Left: US troops capture an enemy prisoner of war. In an excellent essay on the Iraq war on David's website he writes: 'Much has been said about the suffering of journalists in this war. The dust storms were epic and destructive to our very mission. Piece after piece of our needed equipment fell victim to clouds of talcum-like sand. You heard stories of filthy reporters, like me, who didn't bathe or change clothes in more than a month. My socks were so dirty I could tap the crust along the sole. And you heard about the dangers of artillery attacks, direct fire from snipers and the lingering effects of both.'
For the full essay visit www.davidleeson.com

'If no photograph is worth dying for, then why the hell are you doing it?'

David Leeson



Gavin Stoker learns how the Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer copes with shooting under fire

'A photograph is worth dying for.' Making bold, potentially controversial statements like this, it's no surprise that David Leeson's assignments as a senior staff photographer at the Dallas Morning News have, on occasion, taken him a little closer to the firing line than most of us would like. 'I sometimes ask students if they'd give their life to save one person, and then ask: what if they weren't saving a life, but changing a life,' he adds by way of qualification. 'That's the attitude you must have to embark clearly upon your mission as a photojournalist. I've had to ask myself what an image is worth to me, and why I'd put my neck on the line. If no photograph's worth dying for, then why the hell are you doing it?'

During the past two decades the softly-spoken snapper, mentored by the likes of veteran war photographer Don McCullin, has travelled to more than 60 countries and into 11 conflict zones – ranging from Bosnia to Iraq (for both Gulf Wars). Last year he was awarded the ultimate accolade in US journalism, the Pulitzer Prize, for his images taken on the Canon EOS-1D DSLR at the height of the Iraq conflict.

He's now also shooting with the EOS-1D Mark II, which he admits to grabbing in preference when heading out on a job 'because the files are amazing, you've got huge resolution. The one problem this creates in my profession is that it takes longer to download them; though it's answered easily by using a fast computer and Firewire card reader.'

For speed when 'in the field' David will shoot high-resolution JPEGs in preference to RAW files, and – as instructed – won't always send the images back to his newspaper at full quality. 'In Photoshop, you either use compression of around 85% or you can tweak the quality slider to number eight before transmission,' he advises.

That said, David sometimes does transmit full-resolution shots, 'because if I don't, when I go back to those images I have to start all over again with the editing.' He will also admit to cropping images when needed, 'but I do a whole lot in-camera. I'm pretty good at being conscious of the end image when shooting. With »

Above: 'Thoughts of Home'

Right: The battle at Al Kifl during a dust storm

Below: 'Death in the Desert'

'Dust gets into everything. You're constantly cleaning the camera sensor. Compressed air was like gold dust in those conditions'

digital, that's a good way to be, because if you're cropping you're losing that much more information.'

And, owing to shooting in war zones such as Iraq, David has developed a shooting style he believes is a little different. 'I actually shot everything one-and-a-half to two stops underexposed,' he recalls. 'The reason being it was a lot easier for me to pull back the shadows than bring down the highlights. Shooting digital is very much like shooting transparencies if you want some correlation with film; you expose mostly for the highlights but I'm amazed at how many people don't. Consequently my images look different

from others I've seen from Iraq.'

To further the stand-out quality of his imagery, David eschews zoom lenses for prime lenses where possible – a 20mm and a 200mm – having witnessed fellow photojournalists equipping themselves with the same cameras and zooms. 'There'd be a bunch of photographers with either their Canon EOS or Nikon-equivalent cameras, a 17-35mm short zoom lens on one camera and then a long 70-200mm zoom on the other. I called it "the Canonisation of America",' he laughs. 'The end result is you end up with a lot of identical images with the same focal lengths.'

That said, David did break with his self-imposed tradition and take the two aforementioned zooms plus two EOS-1D SLRs to Iraq, where he was embedded with the US Army's Third Infantry Division. 'That's partly because you don't want to be changing lenses often because of the dust,' he reasons. 'It gets into everything. You're constantly cleaning the camera sensor. I used compressed air if I had it, but compressed air was like gold in those conditions.'

David's unit was fighting its way across the desert to Baghdad in a convoy of vehicles stretching several kilometres, but the fact that the photographer was in the seventh vehicle in line meant he witnessed a lot of the conflict first hand. 'Surprisingly a great deal of shooting action was with the 200mm; still, when it comes to a war situation that's pretty close.'

As he's using digital capture, David obviously shoots in colour, and for the most part resists the practice he sees among younger photojournalists to turn images to black & white. 'I see colour as an additional layer of information and storytelling that I had to learn to exploit,' he says. 'In a lot of cases, one of the reasons people convert an image to black and white is because they've done a crappy job with colour. But what ultimately matters is how well you communicate.'

To cope with a wide range of lighting, the prize-winning photojournalist admits he shoots almost everything with his DSLR set at ISO 400. 'But I bet you a buck that most beginners don't even pay attention to what it's set on. ISO 400 gives me a nice range – I can shoot in low light and bright light and the quality's pretty good. But when I have the option I'll go to the lowest setting possible.'

READY FOR ACTION

When it comes to image storage and writing to Flash memory, David doesn't like to go into battle, literally, with anything larger than 512MB cards, stating that larger cards pose a greater risk of loss. 'A 512MB card provides me the equivalent of, say, 10 rolls of 36 exposure film,' he explains. 'If the card fails or is lost, then I lose a good portion of my work for the day. The loss is doubled with a 1GB card. The biggest reason given for larger cards is so that one doesn't have to change them as often. But, considering I began with film, I was accustomed to reloading every 36 frames. The 512MB card hardly seems a problem to change every 360 frames or so.

'By the way, I love the second card slot on the Mark II,' he adds, 'but I see no reason to use it. It's just a cool feature.'

He does, however, use the Canon's full 8.5 frames-per-second burst rate, 'because I can control the speed just with my finger and I like having it readily available if I want to shoot a couple of frames. I don't want to have to be doing some menu setting change. A truism that still exists with digital is: "the best duplicate is an original". You can have problems with a camera in that little things can happen to an image – I've sometimes retrieved only half an image – so why not shoot two or three shots of the same thing as backup?'

Digital technology has revolutionised

David Leeson's tips for successful *photojournalism:*

1 Care about people and take an interest in their lives. 'Every great photojournalist I've met loves meeting people and learning about their lives,' says David. 'It's the number one thing I enjoy about what I do for a living.'

2 If you're not passionate about your subject then it's not worth doing. 'That's speaking to the artistic side of photojournalism but it's at the heart of what we do. We're not primarily technicians; passion fuels everything that we do.'

3 Develop a 'sense of mission' to understand why you're doing what you're doing. 'I'd define this as the opportunity to bring change and make a difference in a world,' says David. 'If I can change one life with a photograph then it's worth putting my neck on the line.'

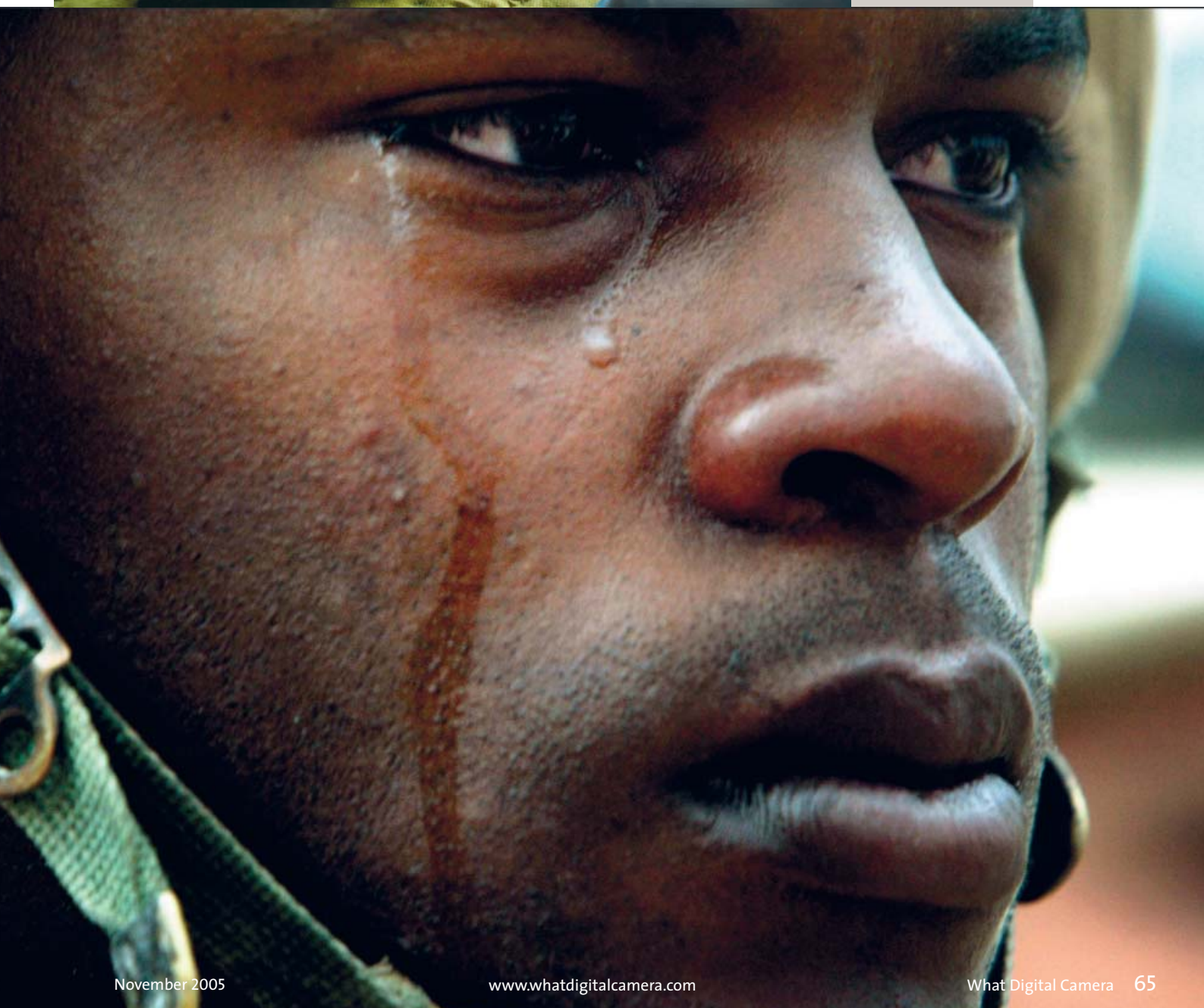
4 Maintain a positive attitude. 'As in photojournalism as in life. Make mistakes, learn from them, grow and move on. People say you're only as good as your last photograph and there's a certain amount of truth in that. So how else are you going to deal with those days you don't make that good an image?'

5 It's not all about you. 'While you are important to the equation because it's about your mind, your soul, your passion, it's ultimately about the subject, the people in your stories and those around you who support you. Which is why, when I won the Pulitzer Prize, I spent the next four days ringing around everyone I knew to thank them.'

Left: A mother cradles her wounded child in Baghdad

FarLeft: Wounded Iraqi civilians ask troops not to shoot

Below: A soldier grieves the death of a fellow soldier killed in action. 'Pentagon rules required a period of time before showing American wounded or dead, allowing for notification of next of kin,' writes David on his website. 'This was obvious for anyone with any sense of ethics. I wouldn't want to be guilty of informing a family member of the death of their son or husband through a photo on a web page.'



Above: Dead Iraqi Army soldier

David's line of work, becoming the only way to capture and transmit daily images from a remote location. 'Digital has essentially made the process very simple,' David agrees. 'We have immediate access; we have our laptop and a satellite phone. To be able to get onto the internet in the middle of the desert is an amazing thing. I don't think we quite give it the credit it deserves. For the first time in Iraq I was getting emails from families of soldiers, because they'd seen my photos in the paper, asking "Can you find my son? I want to know that he's OK".'

'To be able to get on the internet in the middle of the desert is an amazing thing'

David believes – and who are we to argue? – that we're now in the age of the first fully blown digital war. 'For the first time you have a direct one-on-one connection with your readers,' he continues, 'an immediate impact. It helps to firm that tremendous responsibility you have as a journalist to operate with ethics and integrity. I believe there isn't a more powerful communication tool than the still image. In fact, one of the things I thought when I won the Pulitzer and was moved to tears was "Wow, that's great, the photographs will live… they'll continue to speak those truths for many generations to come".'

To view more of David's stunning images and discover his macro work away from the firing line visit ***www.davidleeson.com*** *and* ***www.fieldandforest.com*** **WDC**

gearbox

David currently shoots on the Canon EOS-1D Mark II DSLR, though he also has two earlier EOS-1D cameras, writing images to 512MB CompactFlash cards. David favours two prime lenses – a 20mm and a 200mm – over zooms, though will admit to using a 17-35mm and 70-200mm for his 2004 Pulitzer Prize winning selection of photos from the Iraq War.

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This is a two day event which looks at all aspects of the camera and the software which is supplied. The course will cover the extensive camera features including; all the modes, metering, camera set up, the menus and the custom and personal functions.
The camera features the new E-TTL II flash system which we will look at in depth, together with looking at how to make the most of the flash system. *£195 is in house in Cambridgeshire /£300 regional events

Understanding EOS flash photography Cost £150/£95* Max 14/10 delegates

This course covers both E-TTL and E-TTL II and embraces both the 550EX and the newer 580EX. Everything you ever wanted to know about the EOS flash system and a lot more besides! A seminar that is aimed at the advanced and professional user of EOS cameras, who need to know in-depth how the system works so that they can fully utilise its potential. *£95 is in house in Cambs /£150 regional events

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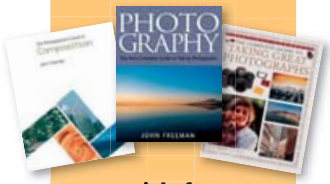
john freeman

John Freeman is one of the UK's top pro photographers

His clients include some of the country's biggest companies. He has illustrated well over 100 books, covering subjects as diverse as cookery, health, travel and home interiors. He has also sold over a million copies of his glossy photography manuals, of which he has written more than a dozen. John also sells fine art photography from his own gallery in London's prestigious Oxo Tower. He is fully digital, and mainly uses a Canon EOS 1DS SLR with a variety of lenses.



www.johnfreeman-photographer.com

Snap Happy

This month **John Freeman** swaps his SLR for a compact

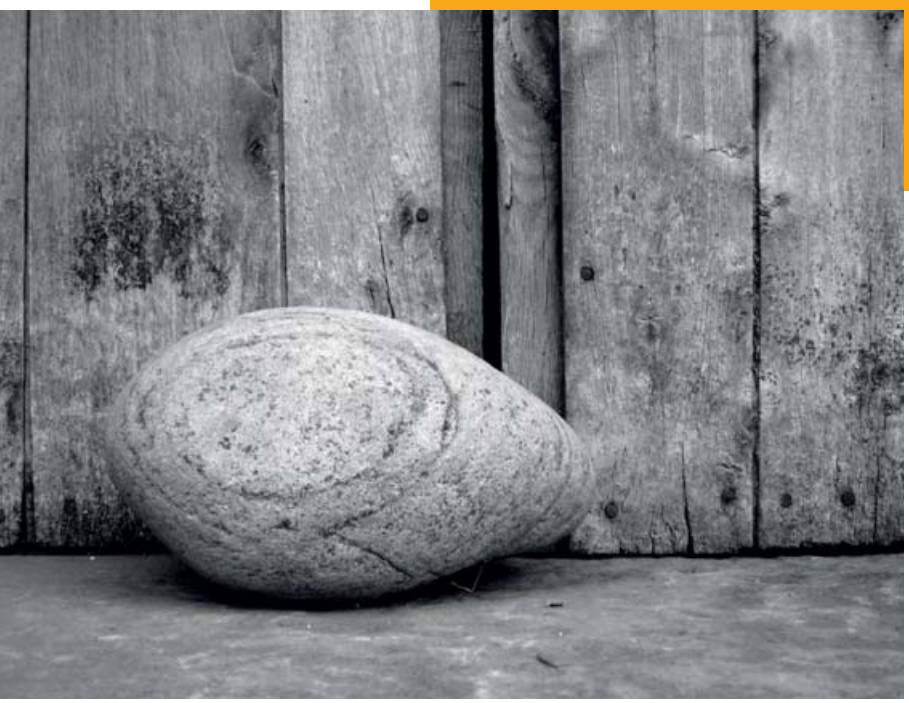
Many people I meet, who are keen photographers, often say to me, 'Well it's okay for you because you've got all that expensive gear so how can you fail to get a great shot?' In some ways they are right, but just owning or using the latest pro kit never guaranteed anyone the perfect shot every time.

As I have said so many times, 'Great shots are taken by people and not by cameras!' You can have the latest camera with umpteen gizmos but, unless you know how to use it, your shots are never going to look any better than those taken with less-expensive kit.

With this in mind I took off on a short holiday with the family and left my Canon EOS 1DS MK2 and all its lenses etc behind. The only camera I had was my new Canon Ixus 700 that fitted neatly in my trouser pocket, so this month I thought I'd share a few tips for getting the best results out of a simple compact.

Close in on details

Small details add colour and flavour to your pictures and break up what could otherwise be a fairly repetitive procession of general views. As with any camera it is you who compose the shot, not the camera! Framing is everything, so use the LCD screen on the back of the body, which is more accurate than the viewfinder. I'd noticed these textured shed doors, with a large rock keeping them shut. It was a ready-made still life which I thought would make a great black and white print. With the camera set to the b&w mode I took this shot and was pleased with the contrast and texture of the stone against the wooden backdrop. I framed the image with the rock slightly to the left, which made for a far stronger composition than when I tried it positioned centrally.



before

Shoot a Panorama

I often shoot panoramas on my 1DS so I thought I'd try one on the Ixus. With the camera hand held, it's easy to pan across a view and keep it reasonably level. The LCD certainly helped with this, and in the final version there was little cropping at top or bottom. When I got back to London and downloaded the shots onto the Mac, I used the Canon software to stitch the eight individual frames together. This was simplicity itself and in this example (which is unretouched) the joins are barely discernible.

Outdoor portraits

Taking portraits outdoors in bright sun can present numerous problems with any camera. I spotted this chap at a local bowls match. The first shot contains many of the pitfalls that are easy to fall into. The character to his left adds nothing to the shot other than a bandaged arm and some blue shirt. The building behind is equally unattractive. On top of this the bright sun is creating harsh shadows to his face. Because of his age it was easier for me to move than for him, but the difference is immediately apparent. Gone are the harsh shadows on his face and the background is now anonymous, so that our full attention is centred on him. This also worked well in b&w.

Use Manual Exposure mode

Most of the time, when I am shooting professionally, I have the camera set to the manual mode, because I like to choose how the shot will eventually look – not what the camera tells me it thinks it should be! This is a good example, as when I set the mode to auto the camera's flash cut in. So much of photography is subjective, and this example may have been acceptable to many people, but to me it has taken on an artificial appearance, mostly caused by the flash. It's also far too magenta for my taste.

By contrast, the manual shot is far more pleasing and the skin tones more natural. The whites are cleaner and the little girl doesn't look like she has been cut out and pasted on the wall.

Turn the Camera

Most people see a view and take their shot with the camera held in the landscape position. The main reason for this is that it feels natural to the hands, whereas, to many, holding the camera in the portrait position can feel awkward. What this tends to come down to is how often you use your camera and the amount of time you spend in exploring what's before you. I took the first shot (far left) from a restaurant balcony because I was attracted by the colourful market stall awnings and the square. Nevertheless, the building on the left is distracting and uninteresting, as is the dark column creeping in on the right. By turning the camera to portrait mode these distractions have been eliminated, while retaining the main features of the shot.

In this shot, taken with the camera set on auto mode, I was happy enough, but felt that the metering system had very slightly overexposed the shot, bleaching out the girl's features and the colour saturation and contrast of her blue swimming costume.

I set the camera to manual mode and retook the picture. In this shot the colours are much more to my liking, and the contrast and colour saturation have both improved. Of course, I could have adjusted this once I had downloaded the card into my computer, but there is nothing like getting it right in camera in the first place, and it saves an awful lot of time which can be used for more creative post-production techniques.

Screen Beauty

In this the last part of our Work Smart in Digital series, **Philip Andrews** extends the high-quality capture workflow ideas detailed last month to the editing and manipulation stages

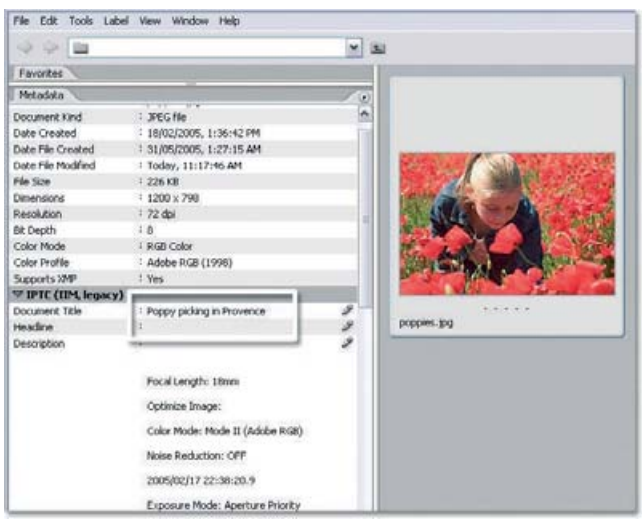
In our September issue we looked at the various factors that underpin high-quality digital capture and how they fit together in a professional workflow; here we carry these quality concerns into the next phase of the process – editing and enhancement.

It is essential to establish a professional workflow from download through organisation, editing, manipulation and saving of your photo files. So let's look at the sequence of activities a typical photographer would use, and the quality decisions made, and then combine the options to form a workflow structure that ensures the best picture quality, post capture.

DOWNLOAD

More and more photo-editing software and camera utilities contain simple download features that automatically detect when a camera or memory card reader is attached to your computer. Though these utilities do a great job of quickly transferring photo files to your computer, some now also contain options to provide image enhancement 'on the fly' with editing actions such as red-eye removal being applied to photos automatically as the files are saved to your hard disk. While such automation is a big time saver, the lack of manual control can lead to less than optimised results.

WDC tip: Don't perform any editing or enhancement operations via the downloading utilities supplied with your camera or editing software.


File Edit Tools Label View Window Help
Favorites
Metadata
Document Kind : JPEG file
Date Created : 18/02/2005, 1:36:42 PM
Date File Created : 31/05/2005, 1:27:15 AM
Date File Modified : Today, 11:17:46 AM
File Size : 226 KB
Dimensions : 1200 x 798
Resolution : 72 dpi
Bit Depth : 8
Color Mode : RGB Color
Color Profile : Adobe RGB (1998)
Supports XMP : Yes
IPTC (IIM, legacy)
Document Title : Poppy picking in Provence
Headline :
Description :
poppies.jpg
Focal Length: 18mm
Optimize Image:
Color Mode: Mode II (Adobe RGB)
Noise Reduction: OFF
2005/02/17 22:38:20.9
Exposure Mode: Aperture Priority

Above: As soon as you download your photos, add tags, keywords and extra metadata

ORGANISE

As you will see, I advocate saving different versions of the photo at various stages in the enhancement process. Having a good organisational structure will make searching for and finding different versions of similar files much easier. So directly after downloading, name your photos, adding keywords, tags, labels and other metadata details that will help you identify your files quickly.

WDC tip: Add keywords and tags to your photos directly after downloading them from your camera.

ARCHIVE VIRGIN FILE

With your photos now downloaded and labelled, ensure that you archive a 'virgin' copy of the file. This is especially true for Raw shooters whose next step is to convert the file to more usable format. Saving a version of your picture at this stage is like carefully storing negatives, when we were shooting film. Keeping a copy of the original, non-manipulated digital file means you can 'go back to the source' and start again if need be.

Most photographers choose to archive these files in their original camera format – Raw, TIFF, JPEG, but many dedicated Raw shooters are now converting their manufacturer-specific files to the Adobe's new DNG (digital negative format) for safe keeping. The thinking behind this move is that it is better to have your pictures in an open, more universal, format rather than one that is specific to a particular hardware manufacturer. Conversion is easy via the free utility (Adobe DNG Converter) that is available from www.adobe.co.uk. There is even an option in the software that allows the embedding of the original Raw file as well as the DNG conversion to ensure maximum archival flexibility.

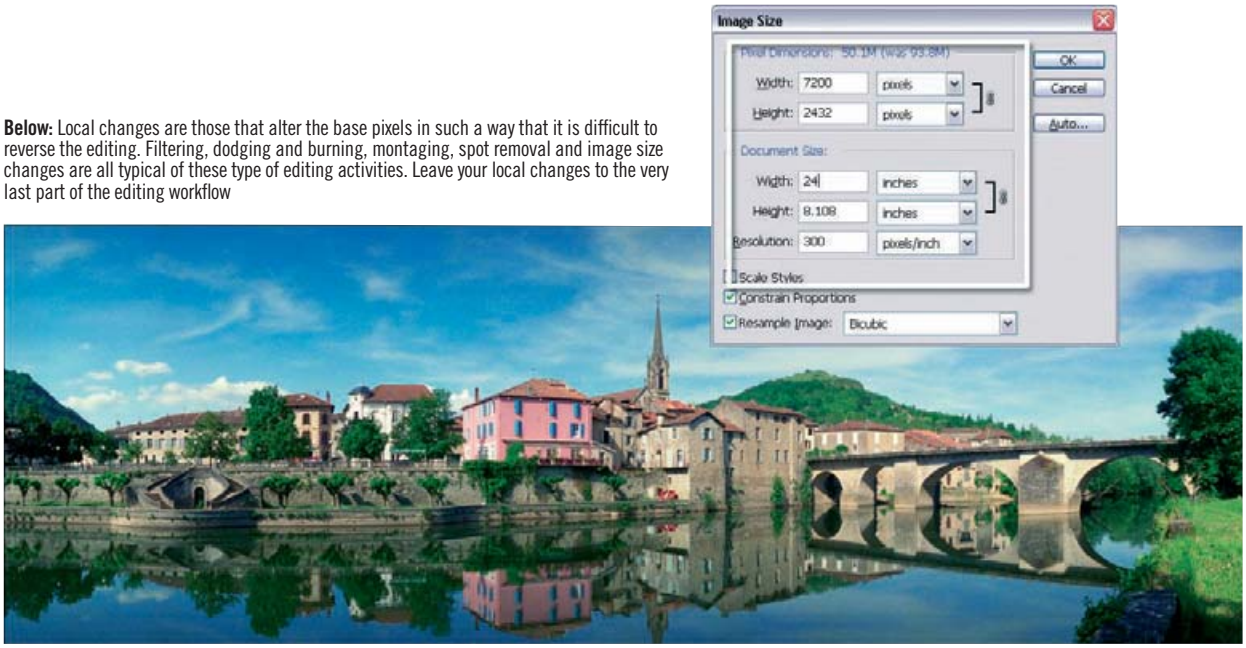
WDC tip: Archive a non-manipulated version of the original photo.

CONVERT TO WORKING FORMAT

The next step is to convert the photo from the format in which it was saved inside the camera to a file type that contains no compression (unless it is lossless) and supports non-destructive editing technologies such as adjustment layers. For Photoshop and Photoshop Elements users, this will mean saving the photo as a PSD file (Photoshop document). Other photo-editing packages will have similar native formats.

Even if you are downloading JPEG files from your camera, convert

Below: Local changes are those that alter the base pixels in such a way that it is difficult to reverse the editing. Filtering, dodging and burning, montaging, spot removal and image size changes are all typical of these type of editing activities. Leave your local changes to the very last part of the editing workflow



them to PSD before commencing editing. For Raw shooters this step takes on more significance, as the conversion process is more complex than just saving as a different file type. Most conversion software, such as the Adobe's Camera Raw feature, also includes the opportunity to alter colour, contrast, brightness, sharpness, white balance, noise and saturation.

WDC tip: Convert from the file format used by the camera to one more suited to editing and enhancing.

GLOBAL ENHANCEMENT CHANGES

In current editing software, some enhancement features and tools still only work with 8 bits per channel files. This means that even though the best results are obtained when photos are manipulated in 16 bit mode, at some point in the process these high-bit images will need to be converted to 8-bit files to access these 8-bit-only functions. To provide a workaround for this problem, photographers split their editing tasks into two phases:

1. Global changes which are edits that are applied to the whole image

Above: When converting a raw file using a feature such as Adobe Camera Raw, the user is able to make many global image changes in the raw editor dialogue

while it is still in 16-bit mode, and

2. Local changes brought about with features that only work in 8-bit mode and are applied after the file has be converted to the lower bit mode.

For the best results, global changes should be applied first and made using non-destructive features like adjustment layers. In the present version of Photoshop, colour, contrast and brightness can all be altered with adjustment layers while the photo is still in 16-bit mode.

Remember the emphasis in this step is making non-destructive (or reversible) changes at the highest bit mode possible. After making the global changes save a 'base' version of this high-bit document so that you can always refer back to it if you need to make further global changes.

WDC tip: Make as many global changes as possible using non-destruct ive features in high-bit mode.

LOCAL ENHANCEMENT CHANGES

Now you can start to make specific enhancement alterations to the base file. These may be changes that affect the underlying pixels of the photo and are therefore considered to be destructive, or those that require the picture to be converted to 8-bit mode before using a specific feature or tool. The alterations made here are difficult to reverse if not impossible and can include spot removal, conversion of a colour image to greyscale, cut, copy and pasting, and filtering activities such as sharpening.

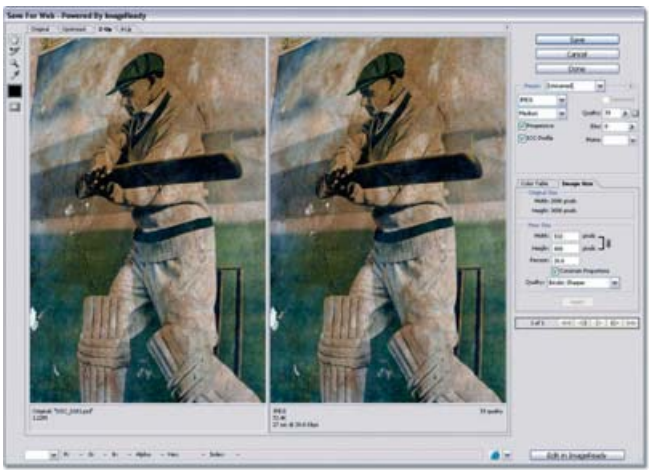
Now you can customise the photo for the projected outcome. This may involve making detailed and specific colour, brightness, contrast and sharpening changes to suit the characteristics of a particular printer, or pixel dimension changes to match the photo with screen-based output.

WDC tip: Complete the enhancement of your pictures by applying destructive changes on a copy of the base image.

SAVE THE FULLY EDITED FILE

The last stage is to save the fully edited and enhanced file. Be sure not to save this version over the base file created earlier. Also remember to label or annotate (by adding details to the metadata) the file, so you can recall how the file has been optimised and what outcome it suits.

When working with files destined for screen, even this final saving action has a quality implication, as the picture has to be a balance of pixel dimensions, file size and image quality. **WDC**



Above: Save the fully enhanced file ready for its intended outcome. If destined for web use, this means optimising the files and dimension size using a feature like Save for Web

The Golden Rules

Golden rules for quality editing & enhancement

1. Edit in high-bit (16 bits per channel) as long as possible.
2. Always use non-destructive editing options such as adjustment layers, when you have a choice.
3. Always archive virgin and base versions of the file as well as the latest edited version.
4. Never edit and resave in the JPEG format.

LEARN: Rules - Measuring - Guides - 'Paste into' command - Masks

The Photoshop Project

Create a...

Original Images: Nigel Atherton

WDC EXPERT
Steve Crabb

Originally from the Isle of Wight, Steve holds a diploma in photography and has worked in design for 20 years. A Photoshop artist for clients including Body Shop and the FA, he is also an author and magazine contributor.

www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Holiday Joiner

the brief

Create one large picture made up of lots of your favourite holiday images in a modern joiner style. Use rules and guides to position accurately and learn how to use the 'paste into' command to quickly create masks

skill

level **1 2 3 4 5**

TOOLS AND SKILLS
Rules
Measuring
Paste Into
Masks

time

45MINS

software

Photoshop CS
Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0

Steve Crabb shows you how to create a fantastic montage of your best holiday photos, joiner style

We probably use our cameras the most when we are away on holiday and, without the restrictions of traditional film photography, we can take even more pictures than ever before. But with the freedom of taking ten times more photographs than we were used to, comes the problem of having to wade through masses of images upon our return home.

In this Photoshop project, we will choose the best photographs that we think represent a trip away and combine them together to form one single montage. We will create our image in a modern joiner style that requires the use of rulers, measurements and guides to accurately position each image. We will use the **Copy>Paste Into** command to create very quick masks and use them to reposition and size the holiday images. Although Photoshop Elements does not support masks, you can still use the Paste Into command and adjust the layer image.

This all sounds very complicated, but I assure you it is not – in fact the hardest part of this project is deciding which photos you want to use.

WHERE TO START

When you look through your photographs, try to remember not just the fun and relaxation you might have had, but try to recall the emotions too and what made you feel them. It could be the flight on the plane, feeling nervous and excited. If you have pictures at the airport or of the plane, then add them to the selection. You may also have had a favourite cafe or bar that you went to. Again if you have pictures of it, then add them too. You will then start to build up a collection of images that will properly represent the holiday both physically and emotionally.

We will take these pictures and crop in tight to areas that will complement each other when they are arranged in the montage.

Vist our website for more great tutorials
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

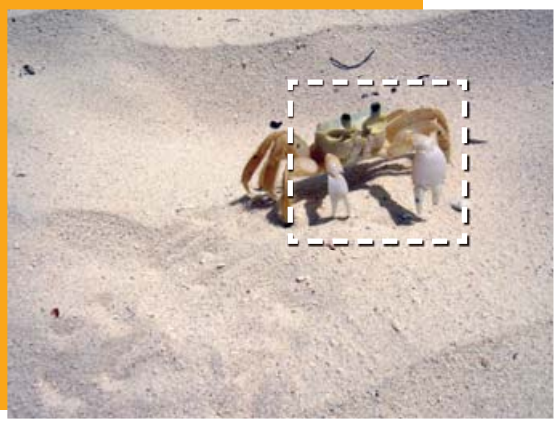
Follow the step-by-steps next page to create this great project

Crop in Tight

Take some time to look closely over your images; look for areas that could create a new composition. Don't just go for the obvious, experiment with shapes, colours and textures. Crop in tight on details in landscapes or buildings, pick out interesting features.

This holiday joiner project is supposed to be a personal and emotional montage, so take time to think about how you felt on your trip and what has special memories for you.

Don't be afraid to crop in close on small sections of an image, as this can look particularly effective when placed next to wider compositions such as landscapes or portraits. Just make sure as you crop, that you still have enough resolution in your cropped image to fill the joiner.

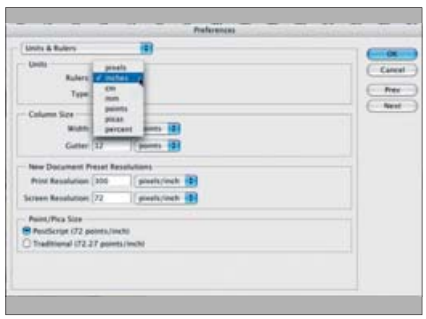


step 1 choose the pictures

Pick out all the best photos from your trip. Don't worry about having too many, as we will cut them down later. Remember we are also looking for pictures that contain details we can heavily crop in on. Look for images that mean something to you emotionally, as well as landscapes and buildings.

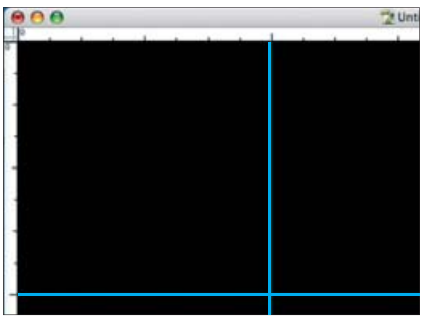
step 2 new document

In Photoshop, create a new document, **File > New**. In this example I have created a 10" x 8" 155ppi resolution PSD file. Now choose **Photoshop > Preferences > Units and Rulers**. From here, set the rules in the drop-down menu to inches. Click **OK**. Your new document is now displayed in inches.



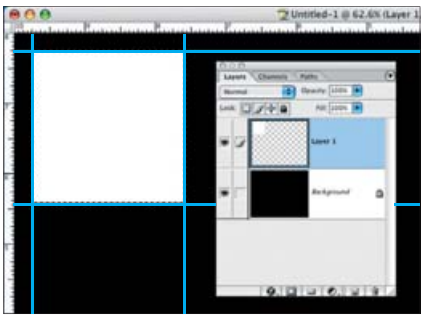
step 3 rulers

From the Image menu, choose **View > Rulers**. Rulers will appear along the left side and top of the image window. The 0 point of the ruler is set to the top left corner. Click on the left ruler and drag; a guide will then be pulled out and set down on the release of the mouse. Make a guide at a quarter of an inch vertically from the top left corner and the same horizontally.



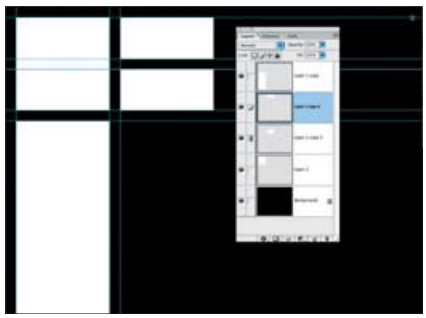
step 4 create the template

Create guides all the way round to make sure you have an equal border area. In the layers palette, click on the new layer icon at the bottom of the palette. In this new layer draw a marquee with rectangular marquee tool. Draw it out to about one and a half inches. Fill the marquee with white on the new layer. Pull guides up to the remaining edges of the white square.



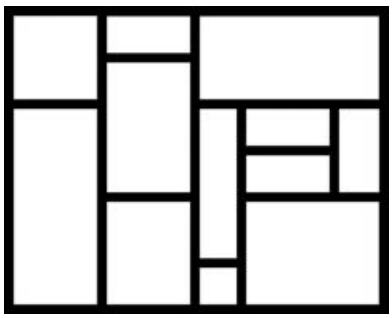
step 5 white rectangles

Pull out more guides and set them a quarter of an inch away from the other guides. From here, create another layer and draw out another marquee, but this time make it longer or wider than the last square shape. Continue to create guides at quarter-inch gaps and drawing rectangles filled with white. It is important to remember to put them in new layers.



step 6 half way there

Eventually you should end up with something that looks like the example below. You should have all the white rectangles and squares on separate layers and all spaced out in the document, with quarter-inch gaps in between.



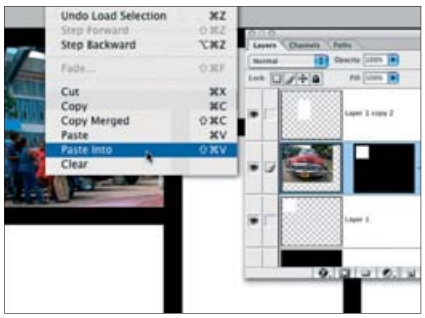
Rulers and Guides

Rulers can be accessed from the image menu bar: ***view > rulers***

They run along the top of the image and down the left side. The type of measurements can be defined in the preferences dialogue box; choose from pixels, points and millimetres. As you move the cursor over the image, a thin guide line runs along the rulers which displays exactly where you are in height and width. The 0 point of the ruler is set to the top left corner; this can be changed by clicking in the small corner square and dragging down into the image. Guides will appear to aid you in determining your drop point. When you release the mouse, the position will change to 0.

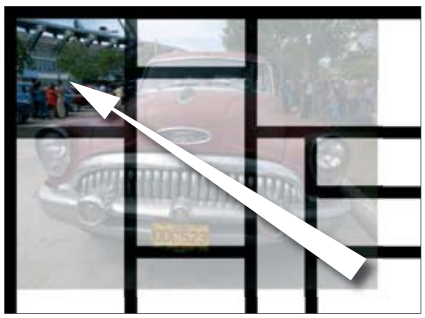
step 7 copy & paste into

Open one of your holiday images and choose **Edit > Select all > Copy**. Now select the first montage layer with the white rectangle. Hold down **shift, control** and **D** to select the whole of the rectangle, (or use the Magic Wand Tool). Choose **Edit > Paste Into**. This creates a new layer above, and pastes your holiday image into a mask the same size as the white rectangle.



step 8 resize

Choose **Edit > Transform** to scale the image down. You will see that the mask is not linked to the image, so you can resize the picture without affecting the mask. Resize the image until you position it just where you want it. In this example, I only wanted to show half the car so I resized and moved the image across to suit.



step 9 continue to build up

When you are happy, delete the original white rectangle layer by dragging it to the trash icon on the layers palette. Continue to copy and paste your holiday pictures into the white rectangles, building up your montage. As the masks are not linked to the images, you can fine tune your adjustments. Remember to delete the original white rectangles as you go.

The Butterfly effect

Each month, the WDC staff are given an image to transform. This month they give this butterfly completely different split personalities using Photoshop

WDC EXPERT
Nigel Atherton

A photography graduate, Nigel has over 15 years' experience as a professional photographer and over 10 years as a photographic journalist

www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sit! Stay!

Nigel Atherton irritates a cocker spaniel this month

I decided to take this shot out of the wildlife genre altogether, as I felt my options there were limited, and towards something altogether more ridiculous.

I don't know why, but I had the idea of putting the butterfly on someone's nose, but while I was looking for suitable faces it occurred to me a dog would be funnier – especially if I could make him cross-eyed.

So voila! Once I'd selected the right dog picture, it was simply a matter of cutting out the butterfly (which I did with a fine, soft-edged eraser) and plonking it on the dog's nose. Well, it wasn't quite that simple. After scaling and rotating it slightly, I used the transform tool to give the butterfly a more wideangle perspective (in keeping with the dog). A drop shadow was used to give it some stand-out, and a slight blur added to match the slightly out-of-focus dog's nose.

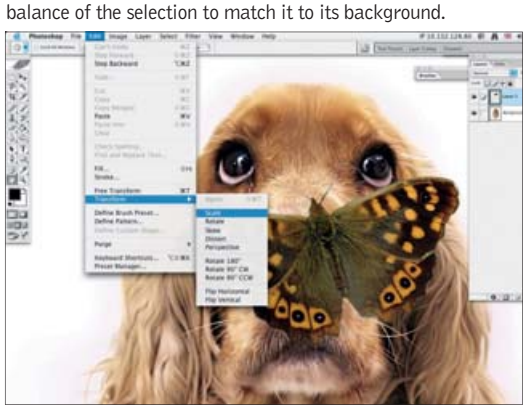
The hardest part was turning Fido cross-eyed. I did this by drawing a circular marquee round each eye in turn, then rotating it so that he was looking in towards his nose, rather than upwards, which is where he was looking in reality. But some careful retouching (mostly erasing and cloning) around the eyes was needed to hide the seams.

Cut-outs

There are numerous cut-out techniques in Photoshop, and everyone has their own favourite. In this instance I used the eraser, which is arguably the easiest of them. If you've ever used a rubber on a pencil drawing, you're halfway there.

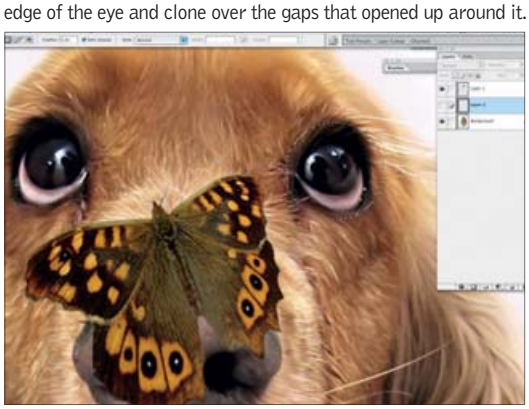
step 1 scale and transform

One of the biggest challenges about adding cut-out elements to new images is getting the size and perspective right, especially if the pictures were taken at different times and places, on different lenses. The **transform tool** is an easy way to distort selections to match the scale and perspective of the host image. You will probably find you'll also need to adjust both the levels and colour balance of the selection to match it to its background.



step 2 rotating the eyes

Messing with eyes is dangerous territory. They're the windows to the soul and so are the main focus of our attention, so if you make a hash of any manipulation it will stick out like a sore thumb. In this case a simple rotation was all that was needed, but as you can see, the eyes are a slightly elliptical shape. I found the easiest method was to make a circular cut out, rotate it, then erase to the edge of the eye and clone over the gaps that opened up around it.



WDC EXPERT
Jamie Harrison

Pro photographer and printer for 15 years, Jamie has used Photoshop since 1997 and became a journalist in 2000

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When Butterflies Attack

Jamie Harrison creates a King Kong scenario

I despaired when I saw this picture; I've never been a wildlife photography fan, and like faked wildlife pictures even less.

I had the idea to take the butterfly out of the picture and put it on something else – but what? Then it struck me. It could be a giant killer butterfly, striking terror into the heart of Paris (the best aerial picture I could find in our stock library).

The fine-edged hairs of the butterfly would prove problematic for the pen tool, so I used Extract to cut the insect out. The butterfly would also need to be skewed to fit the perspective of the landscape, so the transform tool had to be used. Finally, a shadow needed to be made using the average blur filter to give a sense of height and scale.

step 1 highlighter pen

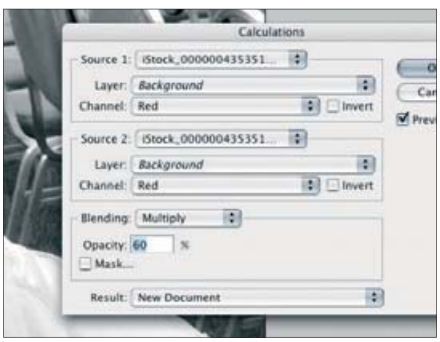
After opening the image, go to **Filter>Extract** and choose the highlighter pen. Use smart highlighting so the thickness of the line automatically adjusts as you paint. Draw around the object and use the fill bucket to fill in the selction and make a mask. Check your image in Preview.

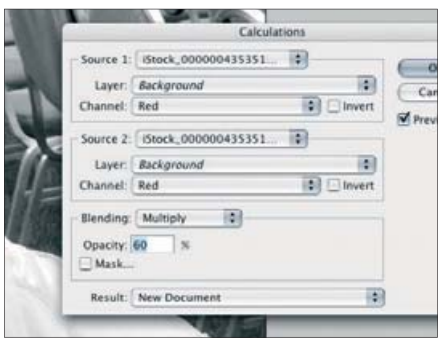
step 2 perspective

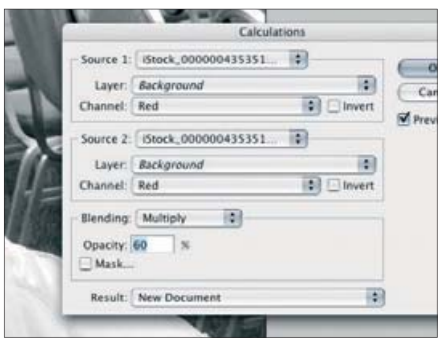
Go to **Edit> Transform> Skew** and adjust the shape of the object until the object matches the perspective of the destination image. I then made a duplicate and used **Filter> Blur> Average** to make a shadow.

step 3 select and move

Each of the elements is then simply selected and, using the move tool in the tools palette, simply dragged onto the background image, in this case the aerial picture. New layers for each object are automatically made. Resize the images and move them around the image until a realistic-looking composition appears.







WDC EXPERT
Hannah Bouckley

Avid photographer Hannah studied Photoshop at degree level and has worked on a range of photographic titles

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Seeing Quads

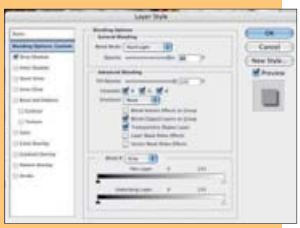
Hannah Bouckley does some mixing and copying

The most striking element of this photograph is obviously the butterfly, which thanks to its bright colours really stands out against the dull stones. Because the butterfly is so stunning, I wanted to make it even more prominent.

I decided to do this by selecting the butterfly using the magnetic lasso, reversing the selection to select the background, and then removing the colour from the background using the Channel Mixer. Use this command instead of converting the image via Greyscale; otherwise you will lose the colour information from each channel. While not offering the precision of the pen tool, the magnetic lasso is capable of performing basic selections well, especially when there is a strong contrast between the object you are trying to select and the background.

I duplicated the butterfly several times and pasted each one onto its own layer so they could be adjusted independently. I used the Transform tool to change the size and direction each one is facing and moved them around the frame. To ensure each butterfly looked slightly different I changed the colour of some of the patches and used the Clone Stamp to create some more. And to add a finishing touch to the picture, I blurred some of the butterflies to make them look further away from the camera.

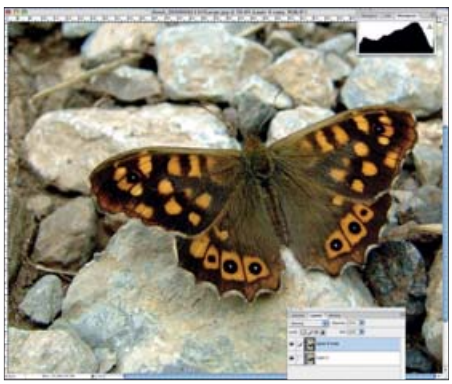
Blend options



We can add depth to the butterflies by adding a drop shadow. Right-click on the layer and select 'Blending Options' and click the Drop Shadow box. Use the opacity slider to adjust the strength of the shadow and select a suitable blend mode from the pull-down list – we chose Hard Light.

step 1 making a selection

Select the magnetic lasso and carefully click around the edge of the subject; double click to complete the selection. To ensure a smooth transition go to **Select > Feather** and enter two pixels in the pop-up box. Save it by going to Select > Save Selection then reverse it by doing Select > Inverse, to select the background. Go to Image > Adjustments and open the Channel Mixer and tick the Monochrome channel. Reverse the selection again to once again select the butterfly.



step 2 duplicate and blend

Go to **Edit > Copy** then **Edit > Paste** to copy the butterfly onto a new layer. Repeat this three times so you have three separate butterflies on three layers. Click one of the butterfly layers and hit Ctrl + T to open the transform tool. Use the anchor points to reduce the size. Repeat this with each butterfly until they are different sizes and, with the move tool, position them so they appear at different distances from the camera. Use Gaussian Blur to add a motion effect to some of the butterflies.

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Andrew Harris

All these images were taken with a Canon 10D camera with a Canon 17-40mm or 28-105mm lens. I used a tripod for all images on the submission - yes I am mad enough to cart one 12,000 miles! I don't see the point in travelling that far to do landscape photography without taking it; the camera gear and tripod are the first thing that I pack.

CAMERA Canon EOS 10D
DETAILS Derwent Water in the Lake District, taken using an eight-sec shutter, an aperture of f/8, focal length of 17mm and ISO 100

PHOTOGRAPHER Andrew Harris
CAMERA Canon EOS 10D
DETAILS Sunrise over the Kaikoura peninsula in New Zealand. Taken using a ND4 Neutral Density filter, aperture of f/16 with a shutter speed of 6 sec and ISO 100. My website is **www.andrewharrisphotography.co.uk**

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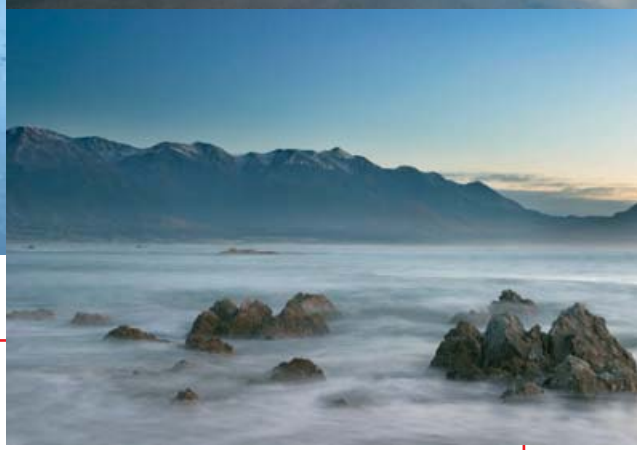
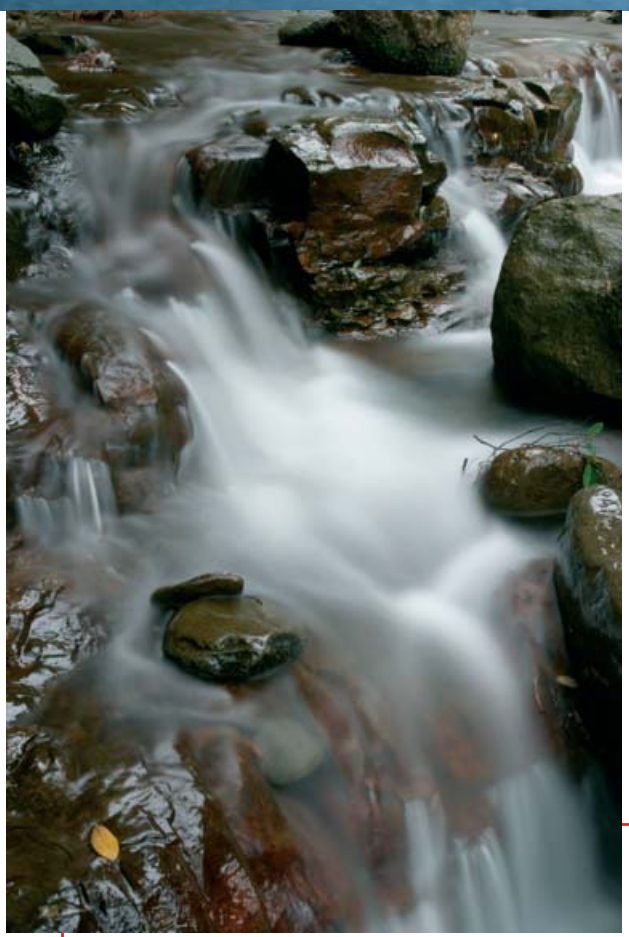
PHOTOGRAPHER Andrew Harris
CAMERA Canon EOS 10D
DETAILS
Cradle Mountain and mist over Dove Lakes in Tasmania. Aperture of f/16, shutter speed of 1.5sec, 17mm focal length and ISO speed of 100





PHOTOGRAPHER Andrew Harris
CAMERA Canon EOS 10D
DETAILS
Dawn at the Kaikoura peninsula in New Zealand. Photographed using ND4 and ND2 Neutral Density filters, an aperture of f/16, exposure of 20 sec and ISO 100.

PHOTOGRAPHER Andrew Harris
CAMERA Canon EOS 10D **DETAILS** Liffey Falls in Tasmania. Andrew used a Polarising filter to saturate colours. Exposure 10sec, aperture f/22, focal length 32mm, ISO 100

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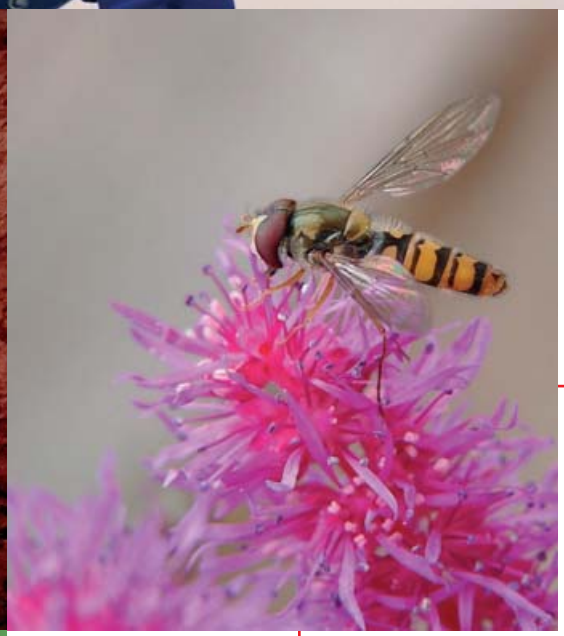
PHOTOGRAPHER
David Vollborth
CAMERA
Canon EOS D60
DETAILS
I've always used Photoshop for work but only started taking photographs myself to help my local ice hockey club out with their communication a couple of years ago.

This was taken using a shutter speed of 1/200 sec, aperture of f/2.8, 300mm focal length and ISO 800

PHOTOGRAPHER
Barry Ballard
CAMERA
Canon T90
DETAILS
I started with digital, a D100, two years ago. I now have a D2X. At Bryce Canyon, I set the tripod very low to create an abstract with radically converging verticals. I wanted the spires to point to a pocket of sky



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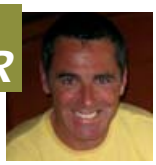

PHOTOGRAPHER
Ed Rhodes
CAMERA
Nikon D70
DETAILS
I am a self-employed carpenter and started in photography as a hobby. For the last 18 months I have started to try and take it more seriously. I use a Nikon D70, a 18-70mm ED lens, a Sigma 70-300 lens and Manfrotto tripod

PHOTOGRAPHER
Ben Seymour
CAMERA
Panasonic FZ20
DETAILS
I waited for a while then shot this image, left him in peace and will attempt to track his progress into adulthood. Aperture f/3.7, ISO 80, 17.8mm

PHOTOGRAPHER
Ramon Milton
CAMERA
Fujifilm S20 Pro
DETAILS
I have been playing with photography for about the past 40 years and switched to digital a year ago. It has renewed my interest because there is so much more to learn

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Evening Class

Send in your images so photographer, author and Photoshop guru Martin Evening can pass his verdict and suggest improvements Send your images to wdc@ipcmedia.com

enter & win

WANT MARTIN TO CRITIQUE YOUR WORK?
Submit up to three images, including, for each picture, a description of what it is, and how you came to take it. Also include details of camera used, and any image editing. Please add your postal address and email or phone number, and say if you use a PC or a Mac.

The images should each be a minimum of 5MB, then save your images as JPEGs to make them suitable for emailing.

The winner each month will bag a copy of Adobe Photoshop CS2, the professional image-editing software that features groundbreaking creative tools to help you achieve extraordinary results. With more efficient editing, processing and file handling too! One runner-up will receive Photoshop Elements 4.0. Visit www.adobe.co.uk.

Email your entries to **wdc@ipcmedia.com** or post them *(do not send original prints)* on CD to:

**Evening Class,
What Digital Camera
King's Reach Tower
Stamford Street
London SE1 9LS**

Winner November 2005

Tractor Seats

By Marc Delaney
Camera Nikon 8800

'I shoot all my photos as raw images, then convert them to tiff. My raw images always need to be subjected to levels and curves refining in Photoshop 7.

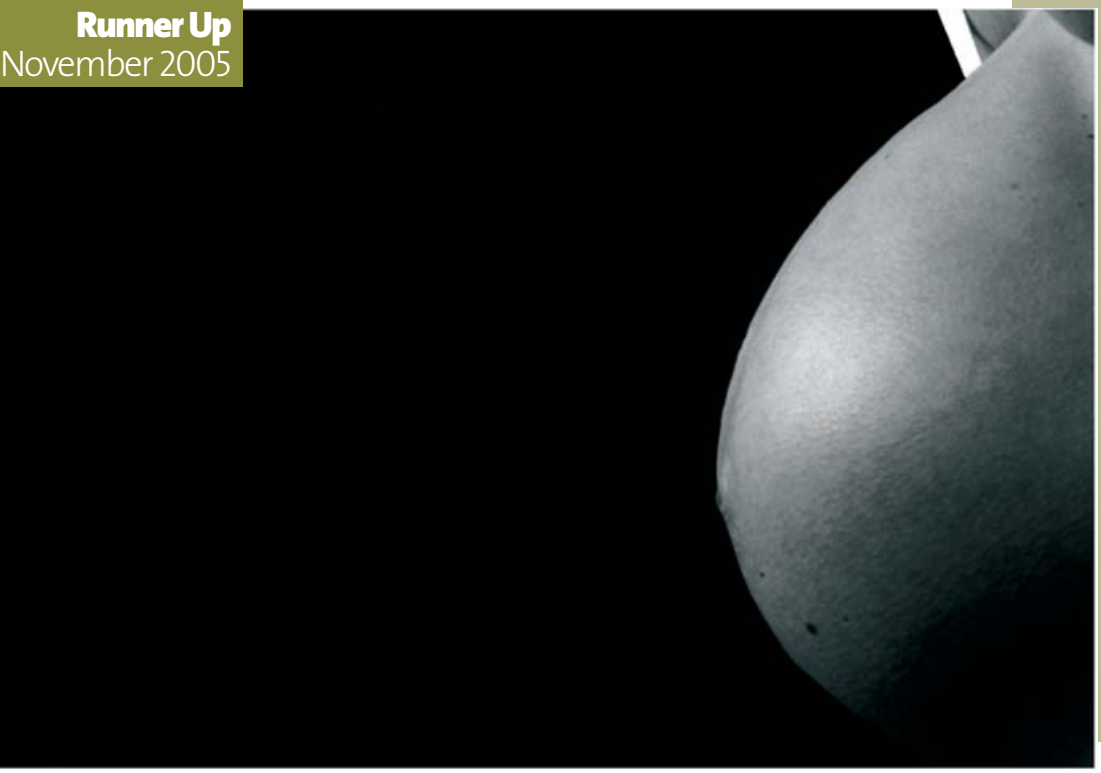
My first submission is the Pattern of tractor seats, which I saw at a vintage car show. No enhancements were made apart from the levels and curves always necessary for raw images.

The second picture is Red rock in grey rocks: I just happened upon this pattern almost under my feet while looking for subjects to photograph at the local beach. Goes to show that photographs can be found anywhere if one goes out with anticipation and awareness. I slightly enhanced the colours.'

Martin says: Mike sent us a wide selection of photographs and one of the recurring themes throughout this portfolio was his strong use of composition and colour. The first photograph shown here is appealing because of the repeating pattern of near-identical tractor seats shown in all different colours. The lone red coloured rock uses colour to make it stand out among the surrounding grey rocks. This also reminds me of the work of British artist Andrew Goldsworthy, whose work features photographs taken of sculptures made from natural materials.

>>

Runner Up
November 2005



New Life

By Katya Evdokimova
Camera Nikon F4 (35-105mm)

'The shot of a friend (who was due to give birth soon after) was done against a green wall, with one light-head pointing straight at the model. The idea was to show off the shape of the belly, so I converted the image to b&w, changed the colour of the wall to black (using Selections and Paths), then cropped it and adjusted curves, levels and contrast.'

Martin says: In the example below, I said the empty black space was distracting and the image would look better with a tighter crop. Here, Katja has added a large black area to create a more interesting composition. The image would work just as well if she had cropped it more tightly to the edge of the woman's belly. But the photo could have been improved with a little more soft fill under the belly. For example, Katya could have placed a large white card or sheet to pick up a little more light from the single light source used.

Vivid Window

By Dek Leverton **Camera** Olympus C5050Z

'This window was in the end wall of an abandoned shop in a Hereford village. It was intensified in Elements 2 by duplicating the background, converting to B&W and coloured to a duotone. Then the original coloured image layer was moved above it and set to Vivid Light blending mode. After a little work with curves, the finished image was blended to a Black rough edge layer (made using a felt marker on kitchen roll) and scanned in.'

Martin says: Here, Dek has applied an interesting combination of layers and blend modes to produce a graphic-looking image, without going too far over the top. I also admire his innovation in using a scan made from kitchen foil to interact with the image.

Angel of The North

By Giacomo Bignardi
Camera Olympus C-5060

'This photograph is of 'The Angel of the North' sculpture. I took it with my Olympus Camedia C-5060, and I am 11 years old.'

Martin says: We have all seen plenty of photographs of the Angel of the North, including in the Readers' Gallery pages in the magazine. This photograph offers us a silhouette view of the sculpture, and the best thing about this photograph is the way that the angle Giacomo used to take this picture had placed the setting sun directly behind the sculpture, so that you see a symmetrical glow radiating out behind the figure. Now imagine this same photograph cropped more tightly to remove all but a slither of the hill at the bottom of the frame. This would remove all the blank space at the bottom of the photo, and leave us with a dramatic wide, letterbox-format crop.

Purple Bud

By Philip Young
Camera Canon Ixus 400

'I hope you get a chance to look at one or two of my photographs. This is one of my flower shots that I took at Nature World, Middlesbrough.'

Martin says: I like this colourful close-up view of a flower head before it has opened. The subject also looks nice and fresh because it is covered in tiny water droplets. These also give the picture an added interest because of the glistening shine and reflections on the droplets. I also like the colour contrast between the purple of the flower and the light green in the background. However, I would be inclined to lighten the flower head a little more and darken the background edges slightly. But otherwise this is a very accomplished nature photograph.

before

Digital Surgery

What's wrong with this picture? Martin formulates his diagnosis and nurses it back to health

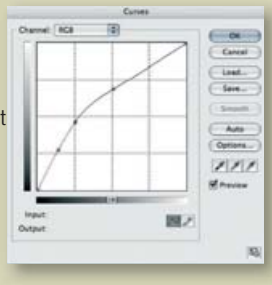
Eilean Donan Castle

By Claire Sharkey
Camera Canon-300D

here's how

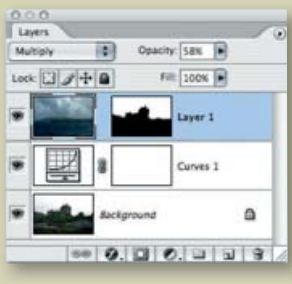
step 1 measure tool

The main problem is the darkness of the image. To begin with I added a curves adjustment layer and applied a lightening image adjustment to brighten and add more contrast to the castle and the foreground. When I examined the sky I realised there was hardly any information there at all, so I decided it would be better to add a new sky from a separate image.



step 2 crop and drag

From my own photographs I selected a suitable sky image and added it as a new layer above the Background layer of the castle. I then switched off the sky layer visibility and made a magic wand selection of the sky around the castle. I returned to the new sky layer, switched layer visibility back on and clicked the Add new layer mask button in the layers palette. This instantly applied a layer mask to the layer based on the magic wand selection. Last, I set the sky layer blend mode to Multiply and the opacity to 58% and made a few brush tweaks to the mask to improve the layer blending around the trees and castle turrets.

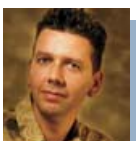


Martin's shadows remedy

'I was on my honeymoon last year when I took this shot of Eilean Donan Castle, in Rosshire, Scotland. It was a very dark day as you can see. But I like the moody, rugged, rural effect this image gives. I adjusted auto levels. Contrast and colour enhancements were also made.'

Martin says: I do like the composition and the framing, with the bridge in the foreground leading the eye towards the castle. This certainly is a dark and moody image and there is a lot of detail lurking in the shadows that remains hidden in this photograph. While the shadows are underexposed, the highlights are blown out, so there is no detail in the sky either. Ideally, this picture should have been taken either earlier or later in the day, when the sun had moved round further in front of the castle and we would be more likely to see detail in both the castle and the sky. Here's a few steps to improve the photograph.

after



Martin Evening

Photographer and Photoshop guru

Martin's latest book, Adobe Photoshop CS2 for Photographers, is on sale in bookshops now, priced £27.99. For more details about this and other great photography books visit www.focalpress.com.
For more about Martin visit his website at: ww.martinevening.com

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA

Photographer of the Year

Winners of Round Five:

Leisure

in association with

OLYMPUS AOL

The final winner of our Photographer of the Year Competition is Mike Morton from Wallington in Surrey, with his candid photograph of some ladies soaking up the sun, which was taken on Brighton Pier.

Mike took the picture on a Minolta Dynax 6000SI with a 19-35mm lens, before scanning it onto his computer using an Epson Perfection 4180. Mike wins an Olympus E-300 and 14-45mm lens. The E-300 is the second digital SLR from Olympus to be based around the Four-Thirds standard. It has an 8MP CCD and a host of features including a supersonic wave filter to keep the sensor clean from dust and TruePic Turbo processor to improve processing speeds.

Second prize goes to Tim Aston from Tewkesbury for his highly unusual photograph taken while riding a Harley Davidson. Tim is now the recipient of an Olympus C-7070, which features a 7MP CCD, a wideangle 27-110mm lens and selection of manual and automatic exposure modes. Colin Armitage wins third prize for 'Bowlers,' photographed in a park in Bicester. For his efforts Colin wins an Olympus mju mini, a stylish 4MP compact with 2x zoom. **WDC**

WINNER: Mike Morton
First Prize: Olympus E-300 and 14-45mm lens

THIRD: Colin Armitage
Third Prize: Olympus mju mini

For more information on the prizes visit **www.olympus.co.uk**

SECOND:
Tim Aston
Second Prize:
Olympus
C-7070

Highly *Commended*
S. Paul

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR
GRAND FINAL 2005

SO WHO SHOULD WIN THE COVETED WDC PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR TITLE?

Just to remind you, the winner will be chosen from the 15 heat winners and runners up, and it's you who gets to decide who deserves to win the fabulous grand prize – £2,500 to spend on anything from Olympus' award-winning E-system of SLR cameras and accessories.

You can see all 15 images in next month's issue, and on our website at www.whatdigitalcamera.com/gallery/poty and all you have to do is tell us your favourite.

Best of all, we'll be awarding a stunning Olympus M:Robe 500i, worth £360, to one lucky voter. The M:Robe is a gorgeous multimedia device featuring a 20GB hard disc with 3.7" LCD screen, plus a built-in 1.3MP camera, digital music player and docking station.

Don't miss next month's issue!

WIN!
A FANTASTIC M:ROBE 500i

For more information on AOL visit **www.aol.co.uk**

the Help file

A problem shared *is a problem solved!*

Send your questions to us at **wdchelpfile@ipcmedia.com**

Nigel Atherton

Ian Burley

Jamie Harrison

Hannah Bouckley

Steve Crabb

Digital Virgins

From: Ian Drury
Subject: First digital camera

Q Can you help me choose my first digital camera? I mostly photograph hot rods and custom cars, but I also like travel photos from my holidays. I have an old Canon EOS 35mm SLR, and would like a smaller pocket size camera, with 5MP a good optical zoom, some manual features, maybe AA batteries too, on a budget of £250.

A *Several cameras fit the bill. The Fujifilm E550 offers manual control, 4x optical zoom, a 6MP CCD and is powered by 2x AA batteries. We awarded it 85% in our review. It is slightly older now, but that means you may find it at a good price. The Canon PowerShot A520 is good although it has a 4MP CCD. If you're looking for a big-zoom lens then consider the Konica Minolta Z5. It has a 12x optical zoom and a range of manual features. Or the Konica Minolta Z20, which offers manual features, an 8x optical zoom and is slightly cheaper.* ***HB***

From: Tom Warnock
Subject: Inside job

Q My wife and I have a passion for historic architecture, (medieval churches, castles, stately homes etc) and spend many a weekend visiting them. Now that I'm getting on a bit, I want to trade in my Pentax ME Super for something lighter that I can slip in my pocket, and gives good results both outside and inside, where flash is often prohibited. I can spend £250.

A *Pretty much any £250 camera will give you good outdoor photos of buildings in reasonably bright conditions, but if you're talking about dim church interiors and gloomy stately homes, with no flash, then one camera stands out. The Fujifilm Finepix F10 boasts, as its raison d'etre, high-quality low-light shooting at up to ISO 1600 with comparatively low noise. With a 6MP sensor and 3x zoom, it's right on your budget.* ***NA***

Night and *the Compact*

With the darker nights upon us, you may fancy photographing the bright lights of the big city. Ideally you'll have an SLR camera and a tripod, but what if you're out on the town with your nearest and dearest, and have nothing more than a compact in your pocket? Don't worry – these shots were both taken on compacts. Here are a few tips:

- **First, switch the flash off. Flash will contibute nothing to the overall light on your subject, but it will cause the camera to set the shutter speed to the flash sync speed (probably 1/60sec or 1/125sec) and a smallish aperture, which may underexpose your subject.**
- **Find a support to rest the camera on. A wall, post, the roof of a car... Make sure it's flat, so the horizon is level.**
- **Compose the shot, and when you're ready to shoot, set the self timer. You may have a choice of durations. If so, set the shortest one. Using the self timer to release the shutter minimises camera shake, as you're not touching it when it fires.**
- **Review the shot on the LCD for exposure, and magnify the image to be sure that it is sharp. If it isn't, try again at a higher shutter speed (either by selecting it manually, if you're able, or increasing the ISO to, say 400). Likewise with the exposure. Use the compensation button, and add plus or minus as necessary.**
- **Try another shot using a different white balance setting, to see which gives the best results. NA**

Olympus Mju 300

Canon S45

Images: Nigel Atherton

Compact Upgrade

From: Macro Daniel
Subject: Confusion and contradiction

Q I would like to upgrade my compact. Friends say that the Fuji Finepix S5500 is a great little camera especially as it has been discontinued and there are some great bargains to be had. After thorough investigation, I have developed a few reservations on the specifications, such as the lack of lithium batteries and an image stabilizer, which has made me wonder what else is there.

I am considering the Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ5. It is more expensive but, I've been told, one of the next generation of digital compacts. This is where the problems start: between reviews and retailers, neither can tell me the simplest of information; can the Panasonic work with Apple Macintosh software and is it as good as a traditional brand such as Fuji? Can you help?

A *The Fujifilm S5500 is now available for a reasonable price and is a decent camera, however we have reviewed both cameras and the Panasonic scored more favourably. It has a 5MP CCD in comparison to the Fuji' S5500's 4MP and, as you mention, an Advanced Mega Optical Image Stabilizer. Fujifilm has recently released the Fuji S5600, which may be worth considering, though we haven't reviewed it yet so we can't comment on its performance.*

The Panasonic FZ5 will work on a Mac, and is supplied with ArcSoftware suite 2004, which is also Mac compatible.

Many photographers upgrade their software rather than staying with that supplied, and Photoshop, Photoshop Elements or iPhoto are among a range of decent programs that are available on the Mac platform.

Regarding your concern about Panasonic not being a 'traditional brand,' don't worry about that, Panasonic has produced some superb cameras recently and the FZ5 has a Leica branded lens – Leica has been designing and making lenses for years and are synonymous with quality. ***HB***

Top Tips

SOFTEN YOUR FLASH
Reduce the harshness of your built-in flash by holding, taping or blu-tacking an improvised diffuser, such as a tissue or square of grease-proof paper, over the flash before taking a picture.

RESET YOUR CAMERA
Digital cameras have a Reset feature, which restores the camera to its factory settings. This is particularly useful if you are new to digital photography, adjust a camera setting and aren't sure how to change it back.

The Forgotten JPEG?

From: Terry Smith
Subject: So whatever happened to JPEG2000?

Q I was interested in your piece on JPEG in the Help File in September. I remember you ran an article a year or so ago on JPEG2000 - whatever happened to it? It offered lossless compression which seemed attractive. Windows Explorer doesn't seem to support it, and neither does the print program I use, Print Station. Has it been abandoned by everyone now?

A *JPEG2000 is still very much alive and kicking, but in applications that are either hidden or specialist. JPEG2000 works best in an image server arrangement where the viewer client samples the losslessly compressed original in real time. What gets viewed is 'lossy' compressed, but without the characteristically blocky artefacts of conventional JPEG. Reasons why JPEG2000 hasn't superseded conventional JPEG include some uncertainty over some of the mathematics involved in wavelet compression, as patents may be involved so JPEG2000 can't be 'free'. There's also the simple fact that conventional JPEG does a more than adequate job already and it's very strongly established in digital photography and the web.* ***IB***

That's a Fact

VIEWING A PICTURE
The best distance to view an image from varies from photo to photo. The optimum viewing distance is defined as the focal length multiplied by the number of times the picture has been enlarged.

FIRST PRINT
Joseph Nicephore from France is credited with producing the first permanent photo in 1827, using a camera obscura. It was exposed for several hours and was produced on a pewter plate.

Byte Size

What's in a name?

From: Mike Davis

Q I notice that several manufacturers have lenses made for them by other makers: eg Kodak and Samsung use Schneider, Panasonic has Leica, Sony uses Carl Zeiss. Firstly, are these lenses really made by these firms? Secondly, are the cameras made by Kodak et al, with their own lenses, of inferior quality? Have you noticed a marked difference between those cameras with a proprietary lens compared to those with Schneider? I'm asking because I'm interested in the Samsung A50 which, unlike other Samsungs, doesn't have a Schnieder lens.

A *Lens design and construction is one of those closely guarded secrets. In truth, many lenses are made in Japanese and Chinese factories for various manufacturers, and can often be found on different cameras. It may not be unusual to find a lens made by Canon on a Casio camera, for example. The same is true of German-branded lenses too – Leica or Carl Zeiss lenses are nowadays more likely to be have been made in the Far East, though the designs may have been set in Germany. Quality control checks will also be made throughout production to ensure their optical standards are maintained throughout the production run.*
The difference between a marque lens and a non-branded lens can be slight and may just come down to a difference in the multi-coatings, and in real terms won't display a lot of improvement for the average compact digicam consumer. ***JH***

USB 1.0 or 2.0?

From: Paul Hunter

Q I've got an ageing Pentium 3 based PC, and plan to buy a USB card reader. for it. Is there any benefit to buying a USB 2 reader?

A *You won't get any speed benefit from it, unless you install a USB 2 card in your PC. But you'd gain if you ever upgraded your PC, and besides, I think it would be hard to find a USB 1.0 reader now even if you wanted one.* ***NA***

D50 or 350D

From: David Paintin

Q I'm about to upgrade to a DSLR and have narrowed down the choice between the D50 and Canon EOS350D. I've read some readers' comments on the EOS350D and a few have experieced focusing problems. I'm attracted to the Canon because of its 8MP, but understand that the Nikon has a better processor and can handle dust problems better with the Nikon software. How do you rate them?

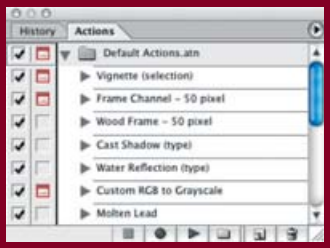
A *Both cameras are excellent and have pros and cons. I recently reviewed the 350D and the D70s in a head to head, and the D70s narrowly beat the 350D. I personally think the D50 has some superior qualities over the D70s so still believe the D50 is probably, on balance, slightly better than the Canon 350D. It's not all about pixels, and I think the Nikons just produce slightly better-looking images.* ***JH***

Jargon *Buster*

Everything you need to know about image-editing, but in an alphabetical order. This month we start with A

A *is for...*

ACTIONS
A series of recordable commands that can be replayed from the Actions palette over another image to repeat the commands.



Left: Actions palette

ADD NOISE
Filter that allows you to add a simulation of film grain.

ADJUSTMENTS
Found in the File menu, Adjustments are a collection of commands that will affect your image globally. These commands affect the colour, brightness, contrast etc.

ADJUSTMENT LAYER
A layer in Photoshop that contains a Levels, Curves, Hue/Saturation or other adjustment. This differs a lot from running a Levels, etc. command on a picture, as the original image on the Background layer isn't permanently affected by the adjustment.

ALIGN LINKED
Found in the Layer menu, this command allows you to line up any linked layers. You can specify commands such as align from the centre or align the left edges etc.

ANTI-ALIASING
Smoothing the jaggy edges (aliasing) of selection or paint tools in digital imaging applications.

ARRANGE
Allows you to move layers either down or up the stack. For example if you 'send to back', you are arranging the chosen layer to drop underneath the lower layer.

ARTISTIC
A group of filters found in the filter menu. Enhancements such as coloured pencil and dry brush can be found here. A large preview window will let you view the level of strength etc before applying the filter.

ART HISTORY BRUSH
This brush is found in the tool bar along with History brush. It works by allowing you to paint over an image with a previous state. For example, if you apply a Water Colour filter, you can undo the filter and then paint it back again in specific places.

AUTO FUNCTIONS
One-stop commands in Photoshop that automatically adjust your image. The software decides on the level of the adjustment and performs it without option.

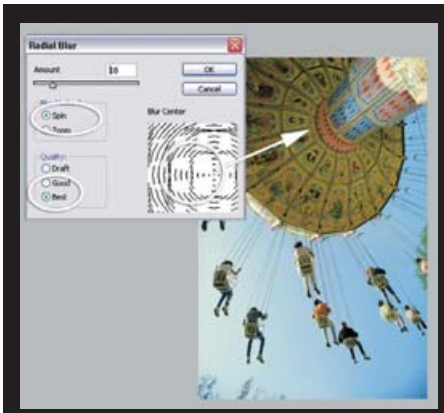
AUTOMATE
Pre-set series of commands, to perform labour-intensive tasks. For instance, Automate>Contact Sheet II, will allow you to create a traditional contact sheet of thumbnail pics direct from your chosen folder.

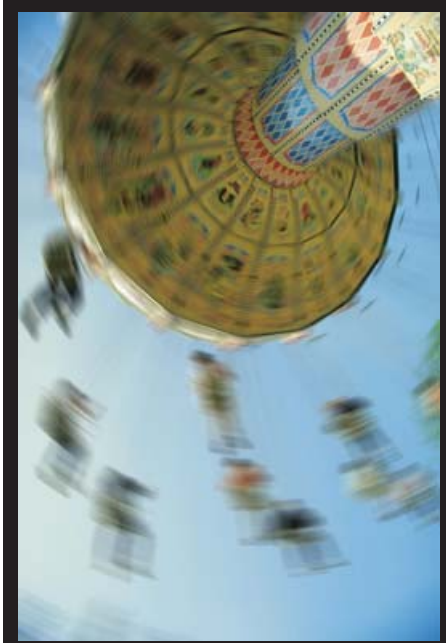
Volume Photography

From: Steve Bush
Subject: How to conserve photo storage

Q I am going travelling for seven months, taking a trusty Olympus OM2, a recently purchased Konica Minolta A200 and a 40GB Vosonic memory drive. While I am in South America I can only use about 200MB per day. Obviously the dream shots will be taken at high resolution, Raw + JPEG, but what do I use for snap shots that might make it onto the living room wall, 10x8in? The A200 has three grades of compression: extra fine, fine & standard. Is it better to take an 8MP image at standard compression, resulting in a 2MB file; or a 5MP image at fine compression, resulting in a 2.4MB file; or even a 3MP image at extra fine compression, resulting in a 2.5MB file? In short, what do you lose by compressing an image and what is the smallest resolution you can use to produce a reasonable 10x8in

A *As you've suggested, image quality is a trade off between resolution and JPEG compression rate. Overcompression will result in digital artefacts like saw tooth edge detail and pixellation. I'd strongly suggest you experiment with your camera before your trip, but my instinct is to maintain maximum resolution and increase the compression rate. However, 8MP gives you generous latitude and switching to 5MP could be shrewd. The minimum pixels per printed inch resolution you should aim for is about 250 or 300, so a 5MP image at around 2560 pixels wide would be fine for a 10inch print. I'd avoid the 2MP mode as this is best for 6x4in prints.* ***IB***





Radial *Blur*

Don't let the dynamic motion in your shots get frozen – it's easy to add action back in, using Radial Blur

The original image (left) was taken with such a fast shutter speed that the people are left frozen in mid-air. The successful use of the radial blur filter depends on the 'Amount' setting you choose and how well you position the centre of the spinning blur. You place the pivot point of the effect by clicking and dragging the spinning centre in the thumbnail in the filter's dialogue. Here, I dragged it to the top of the central pole.

STEP ONE
To apply the radial blur effect realistically we need to restrict the filter's action to the spinning top and swing patrons and not the support pole itself. In order to achieve this, use a selection tool like the polygonal marquee to select the pole.

STEP TWO
Feather (Select>Feather) the selection by a couple of pixels so that the selection's edge is not too sharp, and then Inverse (Select> Inverse) the selection so that everything other than the pole is selected.

STEP THREE
Next, select Filter>Blur>Radial Blur. Click the spin option and then click and drag the centre of the blur (in the thumbnail box). Set the amount to a value of 10. Select best quality and click OK. Undo and reapply the filter if it needs adjusting. **SC**

Layer *Blend*

See how layers interact and make image-editing easy

Photoshop CS provides 23 blending mode options, Photoshop Elements has 22 and PaintShop Pro has 21. To change the mode of a selected layer in Photoshop, click the down arrow in the Blend Modes section of the Layers palette and choose the new mode from the drop down menu. Changing the mode of a layer will alter the way that it interacts with the layers beneath it.

The 'Normal' blend mode is the default setting for all new layers. With this option chosen, the image area of each layer will hide the details on layers lower in the stack. The Dissolve mode works like a cinema transition that dissolves from one frame to the next. The rest of the modes can be roughly broken into five groups:

- **DARKEN** – including Darken, Multiply, Color Burn and Linear Burn modes. These modes tend to produce a darker result.
- **LIGHTEN** – including Lighten, Screen, Color Dodge, Linear Dodge. For a lighter result.
- **OVERLAY** – including Overlay, Soft Light, Hard Light, Vivid Light, Linear Light, Pin Light, and Hard Mix. Used in montage work as they mix the details of both layers.
- **DIFFERENCE** – including Difference and Exclusion Modes. These create results based on content that is not the same between the two layers.
- **HUE** – including Hue, Saturation, Color and Luminosity modes. These create effects based on the colour (or the image minus the colour) of the layers.

Sound confusing? Start by flicking through the Blend mode options until you find an effect that suits your images. You will soon collect favourite blend modes. **SC**

Economy Inks

From: Ken Stanhope
Subject: Cutting the cost of inkjet printing

Q I have an Epson printer 2100 which is excellent. But Epson inks are costly – every month I spend £30 to £40 on replacement cartridges. Obviously I should be looking at a continuous ink system, but which one? The capital outlay is considerable so I can't afford to make a mistake. Almost certainly the first results with a new continuous ink system will require colour tweaking, so how do I tackle this?

A *My feeling is that one of the primary reasons why your printer is excellent is the quality of Epson's inks. Will the replacement inks provide you with comparable colour quality and longevity? As you point out, the cost of getting started with a continuous ink system is not inconsiderable – not just in the irreversible modifications to your printer, but also in profiling your printer to enable it to produce optimum results. You will need separate profiles for each different type of paper you intend to use and professionally produced custom profiles can be up to £100 a go. You can't avoid custom profiling, though you may be able to get free or discounted profiles for some papers from the supplier of the continuous ink system. I'd urge you to consider all the potential costs carefully. You may find you need to print surprisingly large quantities of prints to make it economically justifiable.* ***IB***

Ask Adobe

Got a question on Photoshop or Elements?
Ask Adobe's imaging guru **Terry Steeley**

Terry Steeley *represents Adobe as a speaker at seminars and trade shows worldwide, and is recognised as a world-class Photoshop specialist. His popular Photoshop4Photographers seminars cater for all abilities and cover all aspects of capturing and editing digital images.*
Terry is also the author of Iridius Actions, a CD collection of over 90 production and creative actions for Photoshop designed to streamline and automate common tasks. For more details visit ***www.photoshop4photographers.co.uk***

Digital Signatures

From: Stuart Bradley

Q I regularly send images overseas via email and would like to know if I can digitally sign them to help the pics be identified by my client?

A *You'll be pleased to know that all Adobe applications have a File Info section that allows the user to enter all their personal details into a document, a business card so to speak. Furthermore, this information remains in the file even if the file is resaved into a different file format. Using Adobe Bridge, select an image and choose... File > File Info. Click through the list of sections in the left pane, entering your details into all relevant fields. When you are satisfied that you have completed all areas, click the small triangle in the top right corner of the window and select Save Metadata Template and title the template with your name. Click OK. If you would like to update many images at the same time with your metadata template, using Bridge, select all images and click the small triangle in the top right corner of the Metadata pane. From the list, select Replace Metadata and click on template titled with Your Name.*

Organising Images

From: Toby Swain

Q Can you please offer any advice for organising my digital images

A *Start with a naming convention that works and more importantly is consistent. Using either Adobe's Bridge or the original PS File Browser, first select some images in the Thumbnails pane. Then, using Bridge select... Tools > Batch Rename, in the File Browser... Automate > Batch Rename. There are subtle differences in the appearance of the two applications but they achieve exactly the same result. Select one of the options for the Destination Folder and advance to the file naming section. Begin by adding an identifying prefix into the first field; this should be a broad description to quickly identify either the client name, project, location or similar. This also makes for a good search criteria when subsequently catalogued. In the second box (FB) or click '+' (Bridge) add an underscore as a naming convention separator (command hyphen). These prove to be very useful particularly if your filename includes a date and a sequence number. Next, choose Sequence Number from the drop-down menu of the third field and decide how many digits your numbering system requires; 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. If you wish the numbering to begin at a specific number, enter it into the box and click OK/Rename.*

Above: Adobe Bridge is a great new way to organise and keep track of files

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- Integral CCD-shift, Anti-Shake technology
- CxProcess III image processing
- 2.5-inch color LCD monitor
- Compatible with virtually any Dynax AF lens

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- 6.1-megapixel CCD
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- Simple operation in a stylish, compact and lightweight package
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- Comprehensive image adjustment and control for creative
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5.5 mega pixels SLR

- 5.5 Megapixel sensor
- 4/3 Sensor sets new digital standards
- No loss of wide angle capability
- 2 Colour space modes - sRGB and Adobe RGB
- Die -cast magnesium alloy body
- Patented supersonic wave anti-dust function

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AF20-35mm f3.5/4.5	£419.00	AF28-105mm f3.5-4.5	£319.00	AF100-300mm D f4-5.6	£339.00
AF24-85mm f3.5/4.5	£249.00	AF70-200mm f2.8 APO G SSM	£1699.00	AF100-300mm f4-5.6 APO	£379.00
AF24-105mm D f3.5/4.5	£319.00	AF70-210mm f4.5/5.6	£99.00	AF100-400mm f4.5-6.7 APO	£679.00
AF28-70mm f2.8 G	£999.00	AF75-300mm D f4.5/5.6	£139.00	AF18-70mm f3.5-5.6 (D)	£99.00

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SMC 18-55mm f3.5 - 5.6 DA AL	£179.00
SMC 50-200mm f4.5 - 5.6 DA ED	£169.00
SMC 50mm f2.8 D FA Macro	£349.00
SMC 100mm f2.8 D FA Macro	£399.00

SMC 14mm f2.8 DA ED IF — PENTAX — £599

SMC 18-55mm f3.5 - 5.6 DA AL — PENTAX — £179

Olympus E-300

8 mega pixels SLR

- 8.0 million pixels
- Aluminium die-casting chassis
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Sigma SD10

- Award winning Foveon X3 image sensor
- 10.29Million Colour Photo Detectors
- High resolution with (2263x1512 pixels) x 3
- RAW Image Format
- ISO100-1600 setting
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- Mirror lock-up Mechanism Prevents Camera Shake
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- Accepts Sigma SA mount lenses

3.43 x3 mega pixels SLR

SD10 Plus...
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NEW Mamiya ZD SLR

22 mega pixels SLR

- The first integrated medium format digital SLR camera
- 22 mega pixel CCD imaging sensor (total 4008 x 5344)
- 36mm x 48mm Dalsa CCD image sensor is 2 times the size of full 35mm D-SLR
- Mamiya 645AF lens mount
- Frame capture rate of 1.5 fps

Mamiya DIGITAL

ZD Back — See website for details

ZD SLR - Body only **£See web**

NEW Fujifilm FinePix S3 Pro

6.1 mega pixels SLR

- Based on the Nikon F80
- Super CCD SR II sensor,
- 6 million pixel locations (2 photodiodes per pixel location)
- Adjustable dynamic range
- Image sizes up to 4256 x 2848 pixels
- Film simulation modes

S3 Pro - Body only **£1259** or £54mth

S3 Pro Plus...
Nikon AF 18-35mm f3.5-4.5 D **£1589** or £68mth
Nikon AF 24-85mm f2.8-4 D **£1689** or £72mth
Sigma 18-50mm f2.8 EX DC **£1559** or £66mth

OLYMPUS Lenses

Olympus ZUIKO 7-14mm F4	£1199.00
Olympus ZUIKO 11-22mm F2.8-3.5	£569.00
Olympus ZUIKO 14-45mm f3.5-5.6	£169.00
Olympus ZUIKO 14-54mm F2.8-3.5	£449.00
Olympus ZUIKO 40-150mm f3.5-4.5	£197.00
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EXILIM EX-Z750 new	£269.00
EXILIM EX-S500 new	£249.00
EXILIM EX-P505 new	£319.00

Epson

Epson R-D1	£1999.00

Fujifilm

FinePix A120	£89.00
FinePix A345 Zoom	£124.00
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FinePix F10 Zoom	£245.00
FinePix F810 Zoom	£259.00
FinePix E900 Zoom new	£See web
FinePix Z1 Zoom new	£249.00
FinePix S3500 Zoom	£139.00
FinePix S5600 Zoom new	£279.00
FinePix S9500 Zoom new	£499.00
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Konica Minolta

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D-LUX	£599.00
Digilux 2	£1229.00

Casio EXILIM EX-Z500 — 5 mega pixels — £229

Fujifilm FinePix Z1 zoom — 5 mega pixels — £249

HP Photosmart R717 — 6 mega pixels — £169

Ricoh Caplio GX8 — 8 mega pixels — £248

Konica Minolta Dimage Z6 — 6 mega pixels — £299

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Samsung DigiMax V700 — 7 mega pixels — £219

Pentax Optio WP — 5 mega pixels — £199

Olympus

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C-370Z	£99.00
C-480Z	£119.00
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µ[mju:] Digital 600 new	£199.00
µ[mju:] Digital 800	£269.00
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Rollei

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Samsung

DigiMax A402	£89.00
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Sony

Cybershot DSC-P200	£248.00
Cybershot DSC-S40	£129.00
Cybershot DSC-S80	£149.00
Cybershot DSC-S90	£169.00
Cybershot DSC-T5	£239.00
Cybershot DSC-T33	£249.00
Cybershot DSC-T7 new	£288.00
Cybershot DSC-W5 new	£199.00
Cybershot DSC-W7	£235.00
Cybershot DSC-W15	£210.00
Cybershot DSC-W17	£250.00
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Fujifilm FinePix F10 zoom

6 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — 36-108mm Zoom

FUJIFILM — £259 or £11mth

Fujifilm FinePix S7000 zoom

6.3 mega pixels — 6x Optical Zoom — 32-210mm Zoom

FUJIFILM — £299 or £13mth

Leica DIGILUX 2

5 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — mm Zoom

Leica — £1229 or £52mth

Olympus µ[mju] 800 Digital

NEW — 8 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — 35-114mm Zoom

OLYMPUS — £269 or £12mth

Olympus C-7070 Wide Zoom

7 mega pixels — 4x Optical Zoom — 27-110mm Zoom

OLYMPUS — £369 or £15mth

Kodak Easyshare Z740

5 mega pixels — 10x Optical Zoom — 38-380mm Zoom

Kodak — £199 or £9mth

Konica Minolta Dimage A200

8 mega pixels — 7x Optical Zoom — 28-200mm Zoom

KONICA MINOLTA — £369 or £16mth

Konica Minolta Dimage X60

NEW — 5 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — 38-114mm Zoom

KONICA MINOLTA — £189 or £8mth

Sony Cybershot DSC-T7

NEW — 5 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — 38-114mm Zoom

SONY — £288 or £13mth

Pentax Optio S5Z

NEW — 5 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — 35.6-107mm Zoom

PENTAX — £209 or £9mth

Sony Cybershot DSC-H1

NEW — 5 mega pixels — 12x Optical Zoom — 36-432mm Zoom

SONY — £328 or £14mth

Rollei Prego dp 8300

NEW — 8 mega pixels — 3x Optical Zoom — 36-108mm Zoom

Rollei — £249.99 or £11mth

Casio EXILIM EX-Z750

NEW — 7 mega pixels — 4x Optical Zoom — 38-114mm Zoom

CASIO — £269 or £12mth

Ricoh Caplio R2

NEW — 5 mega pixels — 4.8x Optical Zoom — 28-135mm Zoom

RICOH — £199 or £9mth

Epson R-D1

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8.2 mega pixels
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Canon

NEW Canon EOS 350D

TIPA 2005
8.2 mega pixels
SLR

Switch to the future with the EOS 350D Digital

and take your creativity to a new dimension. Compact, lightweight and intuitive; delivering results to captivate the most discerning audience.

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EOS 350D Plus...
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EF-S 17-85mm + BG-E3 Grip
£979 or £41mth

See web for further lens deals

NEW C5 'DUST BAGS' takes camera grip & lens
£10-£25
see website

Andy Rouse Review
see website

NEW Canon EOS 20D

Balance, Poise, Precision

The EOS 20D is the semi-professional digital SLR to deliver all the speed, precision and flexibility synonymous with high-end film SLR cameras - plus a whole lot more.

- 8.2 Megapixel CMOS sensor
- 5 fps with up to 23 frame burst
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- DIGIC II Processor
- E-TTL II distance-linked flash
- USB 2.0 Hi-Speed/Video Out

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8.2 mega pixels
SLR

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Canon EF-S 17-85mm f4-5.6 IS USM
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Nikon

NEW Nikon D50

Vivid colour and sharp details straight from the camera

Specifically designed for consumers looking to upgrade from a digital compact to the next level of digital photography, the D50 is affordable and simple to use; perfect for the SLR beginner.

- 6.1 effective megapixel Nikon DX Format CCD
- 3D Colour Matrix Metering II ensures accurate exposure control and white balance.
- Near-instant 0.2-second power-up, and quick shutter response
- Fast 2.5 frames per second in bursts of up to 137 frames

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D50 + 18-55mm DX only £499 with £50 Cash Back

6.1 mega pixels
SLR

Photographer July 2005 88%
- Great AF and metering
- Good flash
- Faithful RGB
- Really easy to use
- Big and clear LCD

Available in... Black Silver

D50 - Body only
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An evolution of the award winning D70

The D70s is ready to shoot in an instant, taking just 0.2 seconds to power up. Shutter release time lag is minimised for quick response which makes shooting even more efficient and enjoyable.

- 6.1 effective megapixel Nikon DX Format CCD
- 3 frames per second for a continuous burst of up to 144 pictures
- 0.2 sec. power-up and short shutter release time lag
- Large 2.0" LCD monitor with intuitive menus and help display

6.1 mega pixels
SLR

D70s - Body only
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D70s Plus...
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CF-D70s Semi Soft Case £34.99
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Scoop Purchase
Nikon D100

LAST FEW
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Canon EOS 1Ds MkII

16.7 mega pixels
SLR

- 16.7 MP full frame 36 x 24mm CMOS sensor
- 0.3 second start up and 4fps performance
- ISO 100-1600, expandable to L:50 and H:3200
- 2.0i LCD screen with 230,000 pixels,
- 1.5-10x playback zoom

Andy Rouse Review
see website

EOS 1Ds MkII - Body only
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EOS 1Ds Mk II Plus...
EF 16-35mm f2.8 L USM
£5846 or £245mth
EF 17-40mm f4 L USM
£5348 or £225mth
EF 24-70mm f2.8 L USM
£5718 or £240mth

Canon Lenses

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EF24mm f2.8	£314.00
EF28mm f1.8 USM	£324.00
EF28mm f2.8	£139.00
EF50mm f1.4 USM	£247.00
EF60mm f2.8 Macro	£282.00
EF85mm f1.8 USM	£272.00
EF300mm f4.0 L IS USM	£927.00
EF-S10-22mm f3.5-4.5 USM (for EOS 20D & 350D only)	£524.00
EF16-35mm f/2.8 L USM	£1047.00
EF17-40mm f/4.0 L USM	£559.00
EF-S17-85mm f4-5.6 USM (for EOS 20D & 350D only)	£439.00
EF20-35mm f/3.5-4.5 USM	£287.00
EF24-85mm f/3.5-4.5 USM	£247.00
EF24-70 F2.8L USM	£919.00
EF24-105 F4 L IS USM	£739.00
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Nikon D2Hs

4.1 mega pixels
SLR

- LBCAST image sensor with 4.1 effective megapixels
- Advanced new image processing engine
- 8 fps for up to 50 consecutive shots
- 3D-Color Matrix Metering II

D2Hs - Body only
£2049 or £86mth

NEW Nikon D2X

12.4 mega pixels
SLR

- 12.4 effective megapixels
- Continuous shooting at 5 fps
- 8fps shooting at 6.8 megapixels
- Faster read/write speed for the memory card
- Advanced 3D-Color Matrix Metering II
- 2.5-inch LCD monitor

D2X - Body only
£2999 or £126mth

D2X Plus...
AF-D 12-24mm f4 G
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AF-S 17-55mm f2.8 G
£3988 or £164mth
Sigma 18-50mm f2.8 EX DC
£3299 or £138mth

Nikkor Lenses

DX Fisheye 10.5mm f2.8 ED	£489.00	135mm f2 D DC	£899.00
14mm f2.8 D	£1096.00	180mm f2.8 D IF ED	£579.00
16mm f2.8 Fisheye	£559.00	AF-S 300mm f4 IF ED	£866.00
18mm f2.8 D	£1146.00	AF-D 12-24mm	
20mm f2.8 D	£486.00	(for digital cameras only)	£734.00
24mm f2.8 D	£349.00	AF-S 17-35mm f2.8	£1146.00
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50mm f1.4D	£216.00	AF-S DX 18-70mm f3.5-4.5 G	£279.00
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NEW 300mm f2.8 VR
200mm f2 VR
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AF-S 28-70mm f2.8 D	£1148.00
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Canon

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PowerShot A520	£179.00
PowerShot A95	£209.00
Digital IXUS i5	£209.00
Digital IXUS 40	£189.00
Digital IXUS 50	£239.00
Digital IXUS 700	£289.00
PowerShot G6	£389.00
PowerShot S60	£269.00
PowerShot S70	£299.00
PowerShot S1 IS	£249.00
PowerShot S2 IS new	£349.00
PowerShot Pro1	£449.00

PowerShot G6

7.1 mega pixels | 4x Optical Zoom | 35-140mm Zoom

Canon £389 or £17mth

PowerShot S2 IS

5 mega pixels | 12x Optical Zoom | 36-432mm Zoom

Canon £349 or £15mth

Nikon

Coolpix S1 new	£238.00
Coolpix S2 new	£258.00
Coolpix 4600	£129.00
Coolpix 4800	£199.00
Coolpix 5400	£399.00
Coolpix 5600	£158.00
Coolpix 7600	£248.00
Coolpix 7900	£268.00
Coolpix 8400	£459.00
Coolpix 8800	£499.00

COOLPIX 5600

5.1 mega pixels | 3x Optical Zoom | 35-105mm Zoom

Nikon £158 or £8mth

COOLPIX S1

5.1 mega pixels | 3x Optical Zoom | 35-105mm Zoom

Available in Silver or White
Nikon £238 or £10mth

IXUS 40

4 mega pixels | 3x Optical Zoom | 35-105mm Zoom

Canon £189 or £8mth

PowerShot S70

7 mega pixels | 3.6x Optical Zoom | 28-100mm Zoom

Canon £209 or £9mth

PowerShot PRO 1

8 mega pixels | 7x Optical Zoom | 28-200mm Zoom

Canon £449 or £19mth

COOLPIX 7900

7.1 mega pixels | 3x Optical Zoom | 38-114mm Zoom

Nikon £268 or £12mth

COOLPIX 8400

8 mega pixels | 3.5x Optical Zoom | 24-85mm Zoom

Nikon £459 or £20mth

COOLPIX 8800

8 mega pixels | 10x Optical Zoom | mm Zoom

Nikon £499 or £21mth

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NEW ZIGVIEW - Digital Angle Finder

ZIGVIEW - the worlds first ever Digital Angle Finder, makes low and high level photography easy with its unique rotating LCD monitor.

Simply attach to the eyepiece of your SLR camera where the viewfinder image is captured by a CMOS sensor built into the Zigview and relayed in real time to a 1.8inch TFT colour display for easy viewing at any angle.

Especially useful for low angle photography where you would struggle to see through the viewfinder especially with macro work or high angle situations such as press work.

***ZIGVIEW** will work with most digital and film SLR cameras and is supplied with an eyepiece adaptor for common Nikon, Fuji and Canon cameras. Other adapters for Knoica Minolta and Pentax are available as accessories.*

£114.99

DIGITAL CAMERA ACCESSORIES

For a comprehensive list of Digital Camera accessories from all the major manufacturers visit our website

Canon

Lenses

Tele Converter Lenses

TC-DC58	£79.00
TC-DC58N	£79.00
TC-DC58A	£199.00
TC-DC52	£99.00
TC-DC52A	£79.00
TC-DC52B	£99.00
TC-DC10	£99.00

Wide Converter Lenses

WC-DC58A	£99.00
WC-DC58N	£109.00
WC-DC52	£79.00
WC-DC52A	£99.00

***Please note:** A conversion lens adaptor is required for all lenses listed here ~ see website for details ~*

Batteries & Power

Lith-ion Batteries

NB-1LH	£35.00
NB-2LH	£45.00
NB-3L	£29.00
NB-4L	£29.00
BP-511A	£54.99

Battery Chargers

Charger CB-2LSE	£35.00
Charger CB-2LTE	£39.00
Charger CB-2LUE	£35.00
Charger CB-2LVE	£35.00
Charger CB-5L	£39.99

Canon AC Adapters **from £45.00**
- See website for details ~

Canon Cases & Waterproof Cases

Canon Soft Camera Cases

SC-PS900	£18.00	SC-DC20	£18.00
DCC-70	£19.99	SC-DC30	£20.00
DCC-60	£19.99	SC-DC40	£18.00
DCC-30	£25.00	SC-DC70	£19.99
SC-DC10	£18.00		

Waterproof Casing

AW-DC30	£99.00	WP-DC10	£149.00
AW-DC10	£99.00	WP-DC20	£149.00
WP-DC30	£149.00	WP-DC40	£149.00
WP-DC800	£149.00		

See Website for the full range of Canon accessories

Olympus

Lenses

Telephoto Lenses

1.7x TCON-17	£89.99
TCON-17C	£109.99
TCON-14D	£149.99

Wide Angle Lenses

0.7x WCON-07	£139.99
WCON-07C	£149.99
WCON-08D	£149.99

Please note: *A conversion lens adaptor is required for all lenses - see website for details*

Batteries & Power

Lith-ion Batteries

LI-30B	£39.99
LI-12B	£29.99
PS-BLM1	£69.99

Power Battery Holders

B-HLD20	£79.99
B-HLD30	£149.99

For list of Chargers & AC Adapters - *see website*

Olympus Cases & Waterproof Cases

Olympus Camera Cases

Compact Easy Leather Case	£14.99
Leather Case for μ[mju:] range	£24.99
BLACK Leather Case for MJU-Mini	£19.99
RED Leather Case for MJU-Mini	£19.99
Leather Case for Ultra Zoom 7 Series	£29.99
Leather Case for FE5500	£24.99
Leather Case for C-5060WZ/7070WZ	£24.99

Olympus Underwater Cases

CWPC-01 Outdoor case	£69.99	PT-022 Underwater case	£199.99
PT-016 Underwater case	£119.99	PT-024 Underwater case	£179.99
PT-017 Underwater case	£109.99	PT-020 Underwater case	£199.99

Olympus Flashguns

FL-20 Flash Unit	£119.99
FL-36 Flash Unit	£139.99
FL-50 Flash Unit	£349.99

See Website for the full range of Olympus accessories

Nikon

Lenses

Tele Converter Lenses

TC-E2	£105.99
TC-E3ED	£219.99
TC-E15ED	£149.99
TC-E17ED	£329.99

Wide Converter Lenses

WC-E68	£139.99
WC-E63	£105.99
WC-E75	£179.99
WC-E80	£149.99

Please note: *A conversion lens adaptor may be required for all lenses listed here - see website for details*

Batteries & Power

Lith-ion Batteries

EN-EL2	£39.99
EN-EL3	£49.99
EN-EL5	£29.99
EN-EL7	£39.99

Chargers & Adaptors

AC Adaptor and Charger EH-21	£59.99
Quick Battery Charger MH-53	£24.99
MH-53c Car Charger	£49.99
EH-53 AC Power Adaptor	£39.99

Nikon AC Adapters **from £29.99**
- See website for details ~

Nikon Cases For:-

2200/3200/4200/5200	£19.99
995/4500	£29.99
5000	£29.99
5400/8400	£19.99
5700/8700/8800	£29.99

See Website for the full range of Nikon accessories

Pentax

Batteries & Power

Pentax Lith-ion Batteries

D-LI2	£29.99
D-LI7	£39.99
D-LI8	£29.99

Pentax AC Adapters

K-AC5	£39.99
K-AC7	£39.99
K-AC8	£39.99

Pentax Camera Cases for...

Optio 30	£14.99
Optio S30/S40/S50	£19.99
Optio 33WR/43WR	£14.99
Optio S5i/S5N/S5Z	£29.99
Optio 750Z	£19.99

See Website for the full range of Pentax accessories

Fujifilm

Lenses & Adaptors

Wide Converter lenses

WL-FX9B	£99.99
WL-FXE01	£69.99

Tele Converter lenses

TL-FX9B	£99.99
TL-FXE01	£69.99

Adaptor Rings

AR-FX9 adaptor for 55mm filter £29.99

Batteries and Power

Lith-ion Batteries

NP-30	£39.99
NP-40	£39.99
NP-60	£39.99
NP-80	£39.99

Chargers

BC-80 Battery recharger	£52.99
BC-65 Battery Charger	£52.99

AC Power Adapters

AC-3V	£29.99
AC-5VH	£29.99
AC-5V Car Adaptor	£29.99

Fujifilm Soft Camera Cases For:-

A330/A340	£14.99	F700/F710/F810	£14.99
S3500	£19.99	S5000/S5500	£19.99
E-Series	£14.99	S7000/S20 Pro	£19.99
F440	£14.99		

See Website for the full range of Fujifilm accessories

Konica Minolta

Lenses

Wide Converter Kit ZCW-100 ..... £69.99
Wide-angle Lens ZCW-300 ..... £79.99
Telephoto Lens ACT-100 ..... £149.99
Wide-angle Lens ACW-100 ..... £149.99

Batteries & Power

Lith-ion Batteries

NP-200	£29.99
NP-400	£49.99
NP-600	£29.99
NP-700	£29.99

Battery Packs

Battery Pack BP-400 ..... £99.99

AC Adapters

AC-11	£49.99
AC-9GB	£39.99

Konica Minolta Camera Cases

Case for X Series	£14.99
Case for X50	£14.99
Case CS-DG700	£19.99
Case CS-DG1000	£14.99
Case CS-DG600	£29.99
Case MB-D1	£29.99

See Website for the full range of Konica Minolta accessories

STORAGE & PRESENTATION

Secol Positive Archival Protection

See our website for more details

PHOTOGRAPHIC BAGS

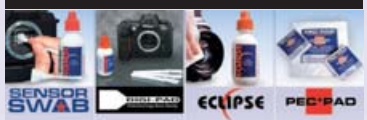
Lowepro D.Res

The first camera bags designed specifically for digital cameras, D-Res pouches have an ultra-gentle brushed tricot lining, and storage for memory and batteries.

8s 2.5"x1.5"x4"	£10.00	BeltPack AW 9"x5"x6"	£32.00
8 2.5" x 1.5"x5.25"	£12.00	200 AW 3.5"x2.5"x6.5"	£19.00
10 AW 4"x2"x4.5"	£13.00	220 AW 6"x2.5"x6.5"	£25.00
20 AW 3.5"x1.5"x5"	£15.00	240 AW 10"x2.5"x6.5"	£49.00
25 AW 3.5"x2.5"x6"	£16.00	300 Computer Care	£49.00
30 AW 6"x2.5"x6"	£19.00	4 2.25"x0.5"x4"	£8.00
40 AW 7"x5"x6"	£25.00	5 3.25"x1.25"x4.75"	£11.00
50 AW 9"x5"x6"	£29.00	6 3.25"x1.25"x5"	£10.00

For the complete range visit our website

DIGITAL SLR CCD CLEANING



Pack of 12	Pack of 10	Eclipse Cleaning Fluid (59ml)	Photowipes (10 x10cm (100 sheets))
£35.95	£19.99	£7.99	£5.99

For more information on digital SLR & CCD cleaning products visit our website

Available for most digital SLR models

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AA Ni-Mh BATTERIES & CHARGERS

Digispeed 4 ULTRA	£59.95	4xAA NiMh Batts 2600mah	£14.99
Digispeed 4	£49.95	4xAA NiMh Batts 1800mah	£8.99
Photocam III	£16.95	See website for full details	
Energy 4	£49.95		
Energy 8	£49.95		
Energy 16	£84.95		

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The ultimate AA battery charger. Ultra-fast Charging, around 30 minutes for 2400mAh AA Batteries

£59.95
• includes 4x AA 2400mAh NiMH Batteries

. DigiCharger

For Lithium-ion Batteries Universal Lithium-ion charger for digital camera/ camcorder batteries. *Mains and car charging.*

£34.99

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12 month guarantee

• *100% compatible*
• *Quality Assured*

for DIGITAL CAMERAS

Save £££'s over manufacturers branded batteries

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Hahnel HL-2LHP (Canon)	£24.99	Hahnel HL-200 (Minolta	£24.99
Hahnel HL-511 (Canon)	£24.99	Hahnel HL-EL1 (Nikon)	£24.99
Hahnel HL-20 (Casio)	£24.99	Hahnel HL-10B (Olympus)	£19.99
Hahnel HL-80 (Fuji)	£19.99	Hahnel HL-60 (Pentax)	£19.99
Hahnel HL-60 (Fuji)	£19.99		
Hahnel HL-B4 (Konica)	£24.99	See website for our full range of Hahnal Products	
Hahnel HL-900 (Kyocera)	£29.99		

SOFTWARE

Adobe

Photoshop CS V2.0 ...£479
Photoshop CS V2.0 Upgrade £149

Photoshop Elements3 (win)	£69.99
Photoshop Elements3 (mac)	£69.99
Photoshop Elements3 + Premiere Elements (win)	£99.99

Alien Skin Software

Eye Candy 5:Textures	£89.00
Image Doctor	£99.00
Triple Bundle	£209.00
Eye Candy 4000	£139.00
Splat!	£89.00
Xenofex 2.0	£109.00

Extensis

Extensis Photo Imaging Suite	£319.00
Extensis Portfolio 7	£159.00
Extensis Intellihance Pro 4.1	£159.00
Extensis Mask Pro 3.0	£159.00
Extensis PhotoFrame 2.5	£159.00
Extensis Smartscale 1.0	£159.00

JASC Software

Paint Shop Pro 9	£79.00
Paint Shop Pro Studio	£59.00
Paint Shop Photo Album 5	£29.00

Phase one

C1 Pro V3.7 (win/mac)	£299.00
C1 LE V3.7 (win)	£69.00
C1 LE V3.7 (mac)	£69.00

Fixer lab

FocusFixer Value Bundle	£45.00
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nic Multimedia

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Sharpener Pro!	from £119.00

Nikon

Capture 4.3 Software £119.00

DXO Software

DXO Pro v3.0 Standard	£99.99
DXO Pro v3.0 Elite	£149.99

CAMCORDERS

Canon

DC10 NEW	£499	MVX300	£369	MVX40	£479
DC20 NEW	£579	MVX330i	£409	MVX4i NEW	£749
MV800	£219	MVX350i	£459	DM-XM2	£1399
MV830i	£289	MVX20i	£539	DM-XL2 Body	£2599
MV850i	£329	MVX25i	£589	DM-XL2 +	
MV880X	£349	MVX45i	£619	XL5.4-108 L IS	£2999

Canon MV800

£219

Canon MV830i

£289

Sony

NEW SONY models - see website for details

Hi8 CCD-TRV 238	£209	DCR HC 90	£599
Digital 8 DCR-TRV 270	£229	DCR PC 53	£439
Digital 8 DCR-TRV 285	£249	DCR PC 55	£479
Digital 8 DCR-TRV 480	£329	DCR PC 1000	£759
DCR HC 19	£279	DCR IP1	£959
DCR HC 22	£319	DCR VX2100	£2159
DCR HC 32	£399	DCR HDR FX1	£2399
DCR HC 39	£399	HDR HC1E NEW	£1299
DCR HC 42	£439		

Sony DCR HC32

£399

Sony HDR FX1

£2399

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SPECIAL OFFER

SMARTDISK FlashTrax
"... the best portable storage device i've used"
FlashTrax 20 GB only £169

SMARTDISK FlashTrax XT NEW

Transfer and store photos from flash memory cards, view on the 3.6" LCD or TV

40GB £249

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Vosonic X'S Drive2XL VP2260 NEW
40GB + 80GB Hard Disk Supports all card types
VP2260 40GB..... £129.00
VP2260 80GB..... £179.00

X'S-Drive Super VP6210
40 or 80GB Hard Disk 2" LCD High quality Display
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VP6210 80GB... £299.00

Nikon

COOLWALKER MSV-01

COOLWALKER MSV-01 ..... £329.00

DIGIMAGIC

DM 220 8x

DIGIMAGIC DM 220 8x £129.00

EPSON

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3.8 inch Photo Fine colour display, 40GB hard drive and long battery life

P-2000..... £328.00

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Disk Steno CP200
Writes CD's direct from memory cards

Apacer Disk Steno CP200 ..... £198.00

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Giga Vu Pro
40GB hard drive, 3.8 inch colour screen and a host of professional features

Giga Vu Pro..... £399.00

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DVD BurnAway
Burn DVDs direct from your memory card

Delkin DVD BurnAway..... £229.00

Soft Screen Pop-up Flash Diffuser
Fits most digital & film SLR's
only £9.99

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create it... store it... share it

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64MB	£9.99
128MB	£14.99
256MB	£19.99
512MB	£34.99
1GB	£65.99

i-Pro CompactFlash

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1GB	£69.99
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128MB	£14.99
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512MB	£39.99
1GB	£69.99

As used and recommended by Andy Rouse

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OLYMPUS

XD-Picture Cards

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128MB	£17.99
256MB	£29.99
512MB	£49.99
1GB	£69.99

SanDisk

Ultra II Plus SD NEW
This card transforms from an SD card to a USB adapter with our unique hinged cover.

512MB	£49.99
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Compact Flash

1GB	£89.99
2GB	£179.99

Secure Digital SD

1GB	£99.99

Memory Stick Pro

1GB	£149.99
2GB	£429.99

Compact Flash

128MB	£12.99
256MB	£19.99
512MB	£32.99
1GB	£62.99
2GB	£124.99

ULTRA II CompactFlash

512MB	£39.99
1GB	£74.99
2GB	£149.99
4GB	£299.99

Secure Digital SD

128MB	£16.99
256MB	£21.99
512MB	£34.99
1GB	£64.99

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2GB	£169.99

LEXAR

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Compact Flash 80X USB

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1GB	£79.99
2GB	£159.99

Secure Digital SD

64MB	£12.99
128MB	£15.99
256MB	£24.99
512MB	£39.99

Secure Digital SD 40X

256MB	£29.99
512MB	£49.99
1GB	£79.99

Memory Stick Pro

256MB	£34.99
512MB	£54.99
1.0GB	£99.99

FUJIFILM

XD-Picture Cards

64MB	£12.99
128MB	£18.99
256MB	£29.99
512MB	£49.99

Compact Flash

64MB	£9.99
128MB	£12.99
256MB	£19.99
512MB	£34.99
1GB	£64.99

Multi Card readers USB 2.0

Sandisk 5-in-1 Reader	£14.99
Sandisk 12-in-1 Reader	£24.99
Lexar Multi-Card Reader	£24.99

Single Card readers USB 2.0

Sandisk Reader CF	£14.99
Sandisk Reader Memory Stick	£11.99
Lexar CompactFlash Reader	£14.99

FIREWIRE Readers

Sandisk Firewire CF Reader	£26.99
Lexar FireWire CF Reader	£29.99

Card Adapters

CF to PCMCIA Adaptor	£10.99
XD to PCMCIA Adaptor	£44.99
SD to PCMCIA Adaptor	£22.99
XD to CF Adaptor	£39.99

Gepe

Gepe CardSafe NEW

The new Gepe CardSafe range offers the ultimate protection for your valuable memory cards.

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CardSafe Basic	£5.99
CardSafe Extreme Onyx	£9.99
CardSafe Extreme Neon	£9.99

ExpoDisc

The Best White Balance Solution for Digital Cameras and Digital Video

- *Fine tune your colour at point of capture*
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- *Replaces your gray cards and white cards*
- *Spend more time shooting and less on workflow*

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67mm	£67.99		

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HP Photosmart 8750 NEW

Print professional photos up to A3+ in true, neutral black & white with low metamerism, or rich, beautiful colour. HP Vivera 9-ink system delivers longest lasting photos; ICC colour management tools provide outstanding contrast and balance.

£319.00

HP Digital Cameras from £99

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Maxtor

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Lacie External Hard Drives

We keep comprehensive range of Lacie External Hard Drives with capacities up to 2 Terabytes (TB)

LACIE

from £89.00

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PRINTERS

Canon

Canon launch new range of inkjet printers - *see website*

Canon PIXMA iP5000 £139

Canon PIXMA iP8500 £219

Canon i9950 £389

Canon PIXMA iP6000D £159

Canon PIXMA iP4000 £99

Canon PIXMA iP3000 £82

Canon Inkjet Printers

PIXMA iP1500	£49.00	PIXMA iP8500	£249.00
PIXMA iP2000	£65.00	PIXMA MP750	£199.00
PIXMA iP3000	£82.00	PIXMA MP760	£269.00
PIXMA iP4000	£99.00	PIXMA MP780	£239.00
PIXMA iP4000R	£189.00	PIXMA i90	£189.00
PIXMA iP5000	£139.00	i9950	£389.00
PIXMA iP6000D	£159.00		

EPSON

EPSON Stylus Photo R320 £134 NEW

EPSON Stylus Pro R800 £219

EPSON Stylus Photo R1800 £359 NEW

EPSON Stylus PRO 4800 £1599 NEW

EPSON PictureMate 500 £159 NEW

EPSON Photo 2400 £539 NEW

Epson Inkjet Printers

PictureMate 500 NEW	£159.00	Stylus Photo R800	£219.00
Stylus Photo R200	£65.00	Stylus Photo R1800 NEW	£359.00
Stylus Photo R300	£89.00	Stylus Photo R2400 NEW	£539.00
Stylus Photo R320 NEW	£134.00	Stylus Photo 1290S	£259.00
Stylus Photo RX420	£89.00	Stylus PRO 4800 NEW	£1599.00
Stylus Photo RX620	£179.00		

DIGITAL PRINTERS

Canon

Canon CP400

- High quality, durable colour photo prints
- 6"x4" Prints in 81 Seconds
- PictBridge compatible – No PC required

£85

Canon CP510 NEW

- High quality, durable colour photo prints
- 6"x4" Prints in under 60 Seconds
- PictBridge compatible - No PC required

£129

Canon SELPHY Digital Printers

SELPHY CP400	£79.00	SELPHY CP600	£149.00
SELPHY CP500	£109.00	SELPHY CP710 NEW	£169.00
SELPHY CP510 NEW	£129.00	SELPHY DS700	£149.00

Canon DS700 NEW £149

Olympus

P-10

£79

P-440

£329

P-11 NEW

With the super fast P-11 printer, you can print out top-quality A6 images in just 33 seconds.

£See web

Accessories for Olympus P-10 & P-440

P-10 Accessories

P-P40 Paper & Ribbon 40 sheets £19.99

P-P100 Paper & Ribbon 100 sheets £29.99

P-440 Accessories

A4 Standard Paper 100 sheet	£89.99	A5 Standard Paper 25 sheets	£29.99
A4 Postcard Paper 25sheets	£24.99	Ink Ribbon (for 50prints)	£59.99

Hi-Touch

Imaging Technologies (UK)

730PS

£299

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Kodak

1400 Digital Photo Printer

An Easy-to-Use, affordable Thermal Printer for professional and Advanced Amateur photographers that delivers outstanding quality and durability of KODAK prints immediately.

Kodak NEW £349

MULTIFUNCTIONAL PRINTERS

Canon

PIXMA MP750

All-In-One: Photo Print, Scan, Copy, Camera Direct Printing

£199

PIXMA MP780

All-In-One: Photo Print, Scan, Copy, Camera Direct Printing

£239

EPSON

Stylus Photo RX700 NEW

All-in-One: Printer, Scanner, Copier at an affordable price.

£269

Stylus Photo RX620

Perfect choice for photo enthusiasts who need to scan, print and direct print.

£179

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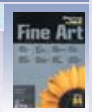

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5200F	£118.00
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Perfection 3590 Photo NEW	£99.00
Perfection 4490 Photo NEW	£179.00
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HP Flatbed Scanners

Photosmart 1200	£69.00
Scanjet 4600	£129.00
Photosmart 4670	£139.00
Scanjet 5530	£179.00

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Minolta Scan Dual IV

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Minolta Scan Dual IV £215.00

Minolta Scan Elite 5400 II NEW £495.00

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Nikon Super Coolscan 5000ED £695.00

Nikon Super Coolscan 9000ED £2199.00

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EPSON F3200 NEW

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Spyder 2 £139.00

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Gretag Macbeth

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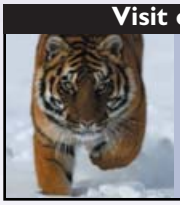

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- Eos 350D/SIG 18/125 ..... £719.99
- Eos 350D/SIG 28/200 ..... £689.99
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- Eos 20D/TAM 11/18 ..... £1299.99
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- D70s/TAM 28/200 ..... £729.99
- D70s/TAM 28/300 ..... £789.99
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- D50/SIG 28/200 ..... £549.99
- D50/SIG 28/300 ..... £589.99
- D50/SIG 24/70 2.8 ..... £709.99
- D50/TAM 28/200 ..... £569.99
- D50/TAM 28/300 ..... £629.99
- D50/TAM 18/200 ..... £699.99
- D50/TAM 11/18 ..... £789.99

Prices include £50 Nikon Cashback

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- Dynax 7D/SIG 18/125 ..... £869.99
- Dynax 7D/SIG 28/200 ..... £829.99
- Dynax 7D/SIG 28/300 ..... £839.99
- Dynax 7D/SIG 24/70 2.8 ..... £959.99
- Dynax 7D/TAM 28/300 ..... £879.99
- Dynax 7D/TAM 18/200 ..... £949.99
- Dynax 7D/TAM 11/18 ..... £1039.99
- Dynax 7D/TAM 17/35 ..... £979.99

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- Dynax 5D/SIG 18/200 ..... £779.99
- Dynax 5D/SIG 18/125 ..... £719.99
- Dynax 5D/SIG 28/200 ..... £669.99
- Dynax 5D/SIG 28/300 ..... £689.99
- Dynax 5D/SIG 24/70 2.8 ..... £849.99
- Dynax 5D/TAM 28/300 ..... £739.99
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Olympus

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- E1 14-54 f2.8/3.5/Flash £999.99

Pentax

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- *ist DS /18-55 ..... £call
- *ist DL /18-55 ..... £549.99

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EF-S 18-55 f3.5/4.5USM £129.99
EF- L USM 24/70 f2.8 ..... £938.99
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EF USM 20/35 f2.8 ..... £289.99
EF USM 24/85 f3.5/4.5 ..... £244.99
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EF USM 28/105 f3.5/4.5 MK2 ..... £184.99
EF USM 28/135 f3.5/5.6 IS £339.99
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Nikon

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Canon, Nikon & Minolta

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- 150 f2.8 DG Macro £439.99
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BG-ED3 Grip for D60/10D £119.99
BG-E1 Grip for 300D £119.99
BG-E3 Grip for D350D £129.99
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EH17-L Case EOS20D £34.99
EH18-LCase EOS350D £34.99
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ACK-700 for 350D £44.99
BP511A Battery £49.49
NB-2L Battery £39.99

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CF-D50 Case £32.99
ML-L3 Remote Control £14.99
SB-22S Flashgun £139.99
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SB-600 Flashgun £169.99
SB-800 Flashgun £289.99
EN-EL3 ..... £49.99

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AC-11 Mains Adaptor ..... ~~£40.99~~ £39
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RC-3IR Remote Control £19.99
VC-D7 Vertical Grip £149.99
CS-70 Case £49.00

Flashgun 3600HS(D) £139.99
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- Powershot S70 ..... £289.95
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Nikon

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- MJU Mini Accessory Kit £39.95
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- C725 ..... £99.99
- C765 ..... £159.99
- C7070 ..... £369.99

Panasonic

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Pentax

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- Optio S5z £214.99
- Optio SVi £214.99
- Optio X £239.99
- Optio WP £199.99

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Canon

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NB-4L Battery for Ixus 40/50 ..... £29.99
NB-2/3L Battery for Powershot £39.99
NB-5H Battery for S10/S20 ..... £29.99
BP-511 Battery for D60/10D/G5 ..... £49.99
ACK500/600/700 ..... £44.99
ACK-900 ..... £29.99

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WC-DC58N Wide G3/5 ..... £99.99
TC-DC58 Tele G1/2 ..... £69.99
TC-DC58N Tele G3/5 ..... £69.99
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LA-DC52C Lens Adapt. A70 ..... £14.99
LA-DC52D Lens Adapt. A80 ..... £14.99
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NP100 Battery £29.99
NP80 Battery ..... ~~£42.99~~ £29
NP60 Battery £34.99
NP40 Battery £34.99
NP30 Battery £34.99
BC80 Charger £54.99
BC60 Charger £49.99

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Minolta

Batteries & AC Adaptors

NP-400 Battery £49.99
NP-700 Battery £29.99
NP-800 Battery £39.99
NP-900 Battery £19.99
BP-400 Battery Grip for A1/2 ..... ~~£99.99~~ £50
Lithium Batteries F100/200/300 ..... £19.99
Lithium Battery Dimage X £29.99
AC-2L Mains Adaptor £59.99
AC-11 Mains Adaptor ..... ~~£49.99~~ £39
External Battery Kit EBP-100 ..... £189.99

Accessories

RS-1000L Remote Cable £54.99
RC-1000S Remote Cable £34.99
RC-3IR Remote Control £19.99

Lenses

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ZCW200 WA £69.99
ZCW300 WA £79.99
ACW100 WA £139.99
ACT100 WA £139.99

Flashguns

Flashgun 3600HS(D) £139.99
Flashgun 5600HS(D) £259.99
Flashgun 2500(D) £99.99

Nikon

Accessories

SC-17TTL Sensor Cable £59.99
Multi Flash Bracket SK-E900 ..... ~~£69.99~~ £50
Multi Flash Adaptor £44.99

Accessories

MC-EU1 Remote Control £109.99
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Nikon Filterkit (4) & Adaptor 5700 ..... £119.99

MD-D100 Grip £239.99
MB-E5700 Grip ..... ~~£119.99~~ £99

Batteries & AC Adaptors

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EN-EL1 ..... £34.99
EN-EL2 ..... £39.99
EN-EL7 ..... £39.99
EN-4 ..... £89.99
EH-30 ..... ~~£49.99~~ £29
EH-31/EH21 ..... ~~£49.99~~ £29
EH53AC £29.99
MH-16 Quick Charger £219.99

Lenses & Accessories

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Wideangle WC-E63 ..... ~~£99.99~~ £79
Wideangle WC-E68 ..... £119.99
Wideangle WC-E80 ..... £119.99
Fisheye FC-E8 ..... ~~£209.99~~ £169
Fisheye FC-E9 ..... ~~£219.99~~ £179
Telephoto TC-E15ED ..... ~~£129.99~~ £99
Telephoto TC-E2 ..... £99.99
Telephoto TC-E3ED ..... ~~£219.99~~ £179
HR-E5700 Lenshood £19.99
HN-CP10 Lenshood for 5400 ..... £19.99

Olympus

Cases

Card Case - Leather £12.99
C5050z Leather £29.99
C5060z Leather ..... ~~£24.99~~ £19
C50/60z Leather £24.99
C700 Series Leather £29.99
C2x/3x/3x/5x - Leather £29.99
MJU Leather De Luxe £24.99
MJU Leather - Standard £19.99
Compact Models Velvet £9.99
Compact Models Vinyl £12.99
E10/E20 - Leather £39.99

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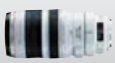

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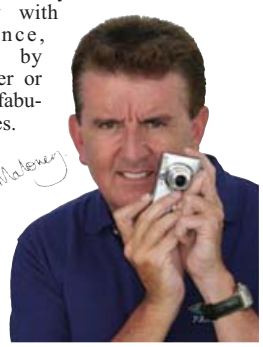

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- 2.5" LCD
- Compact design

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- 3x optical zoom

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- 5x optical zoom
- Magnesium Alloy

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- 10.2 million pixels

was £1099.99

Lens Sold Separately

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SD10 + 18-50mm	£549.99*
SD10 + 18-125mm	£649.99*
SD10 + 28-300mm	£669.99*
SD10 + 12-24mm	£879.99*

Sigma Lenses

AF 8mm f4 EX Circular Fisheye	£499.99
AF 14mm f2.8 Asp EX (gelatin filter)	£549.99
AF 15mm f2.8 Diagonal Fisheye	£309.99
AF 20mm f1.8 Aspherical EX DG	£254.99
AF 30mm f/1.4 EX DC HSM	£299.99
AF 50mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro	£199.99
AF 105mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro	£299.99
AF 150mm f/2.8 EX DG HSM Macro	£439.99
AF 10-20mm f/4-5.6 EX DC HSM	£339.99
AF 12-24mm f4.5-5.6 DG EX Asp HSM	£449.99
AF 15-30mm f3.5-4.5 DG EX	£409.99
AF 17-35mm f2.8-4 EX DG Aspherical	£319.99
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AF 18-50mm f3.5-5.6 DC + AF 55-200mm	£189.98
AF 18-125mm f3.5-5.6 DC SLD	£199.99
AF 18-200mm f/3.5-6.3 DC	£269.99
AF 20-40mm F2.8 EX	£299.99
AF 24-60mm F2.8 DG EX	£299.99
AF 24-70mm f2.8 Asp EX DG Macro	£304.99
AF 24-135mm f2.8-4.5 Aspherical IF	£239.99
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- Fourth Generation Super CCD with 3.1 million S-Pixels + 3.1 million R-Pixels, delivering 6.03 million recorded pixels
- 6x optical zoom lens (equivalent to 35 - 210mm) • Full manual control
- External flash option via PC sync socket or hot-shoe
- USB 2.0 and Firewire (IEEE 1394) connections

SRP £349.99 **Our Price £239.99***

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WAS £149.99 NEW PRICE £89.99
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Sigma 62mm Circular Polarising	£69.99
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Sigma 67mm Circular Polarising	£89.99
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Sigma 72mm Circular Polarising	£94.99
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Sigma 77mm Circular Polarising	£99.99
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Sandisk 1GB	£80.00*
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Fuji 1GB	£85.00*
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- 6.3 million pixels
- 3x optical zoom
- 2.5" LCD Screen
- Superb Low Light mode (1600 ISO)

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- High Res 2.0" LCD Screen
- Pro images @ Amateur price

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- 10x optical zoom
- Pop up Flash

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- ISO 800 - twice as effective in low light
- 2.5" LCD screen
- 3x optical zoom

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RICOH

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-

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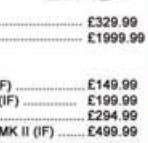

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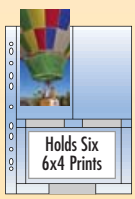

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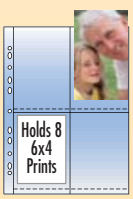

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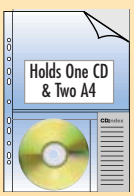

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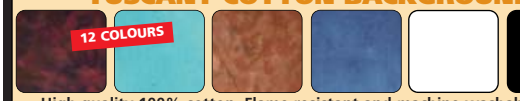

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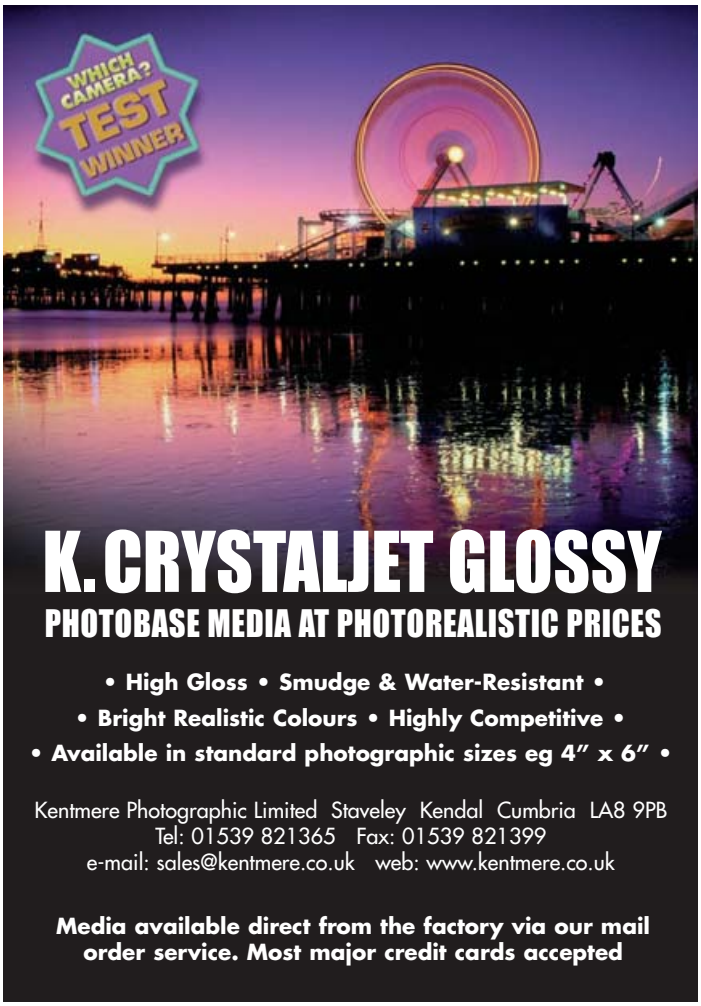

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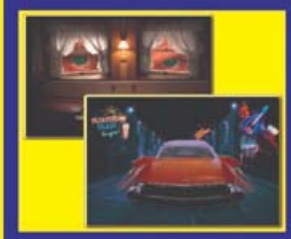

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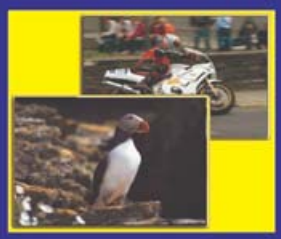

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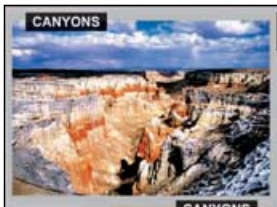

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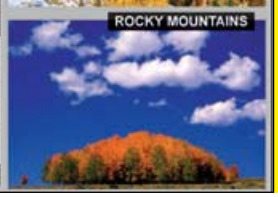

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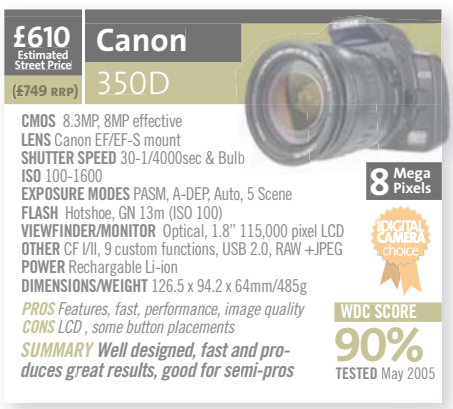
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TESTED May 2005

MAKE AND MODEL
Cameras are listed in ascending order of price

SENSOR SIZE
How many megapixels? A guide to image quality

AWARDS
A gold rosette is given for highly recommended models

OVERALL SCORE
Total score out of 100, plus date model was tested

About the Ratings

RATINGS Products are rated out of 20 by five criteria which, when combined, provide a mark out of a hundred.

FEATURES How well specified is the product? Does it have all the features that you're likely to need?

DESIGN Is the design stylish or ugly? Comfortable or awkward? Functional or impractical? Design is about handling as well as looks.

PERFORMANCE How does it handle? Are the buttons well placed? Is the menu simple? Is it responsive or sluggish?

QUALITY How are the results? Sharp or soft? Is the colour accurate? Do the images suffer from noise, fringing, distortion?

VALUE Is it competitively priced? How does it compare with its nearest rivals? Our scores are based upon the retail price at launch (RRP).

In this volatile market prices change almost monthly, and as cameras become cheaper they inevitably become better value. It would be impractical and confusing to change the scores every month, so we include the RRP along with the current average street price. Where there's a big difference it can be assumed that the product is now better value than when it was tested, but also that it may be coming towards the end of its natural shelf life. Highly recommended cameras receive the WDC rosette.

On The Web

TAKE THE 360° VIRTUAL TOUR

You'll find product photos and 360° Quicktime tours of virtually every current camera, plus sample test images taken by our reviewers for you to view or download. You can also buy tests or back issues online, or subscribe. In addition you'll find daily news on all the latest product launches, reader forums, a gallery for your own pictures, plus loads of features and techniques, useful links, competitions, events listings, bookshop and lots more, just visit www.whatdigitalcamera.com

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA www.whatdigitalcamera.com

£90 Estimated Street Price (£120 RRP) — Olympus 370

CCD 3.2MP
LENS 38-114mm f/2.9 – 5.0
SHUTTER SPEED 2-1/2000sec
ISO Auto 100-400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Prog AE, 4 Scene modes
FLASH GN 11
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/1.5in LCD
OTHER xD, 320x240 movies to limit of storage, USB interface
POWER 2x AA or NiMH rechargeable AAs
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 87.5 x 62.5 x 38.5mm/140g

3 Mega Pixels

PROS Design, easy to use, price, excellent 2cm macro
CONS No optical viewfinder, noisy images

WDC SCORE 82%

SUMMARY ***Simple to use and capable considering the price***

TESTED Apr 2005

£99 Estimated Street Price (£99 RRP) — HP M22

CCD 4.05MP effective
LENS 37mm f/2.8-6.5
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/1800sec
ISO Auto, 100-400
EXPOSURE MODES P + 8 scene
FLASH Built-in, Auto plus 4
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/1.5inch 61,600 pixel Active Matrix
OTHER 320x240 24fps Video, SD/MMC, ±3EV in 1/3EV steps
POWER 2x AA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 96 x 29 x 49mm/120g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Ease of use, size
CONS Limited features, slow, digital zoom only

WDC SCORE 80%

SUMMARY ***No optical zoom and little control, but delivers in image quality***

TESTED Oct 2005

£110 Estimated Street Price (£110 RRP) — HP M417

CCD 5.19MP
LENS 36-108mm f/2.9-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 2-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 100-400
EXPOSURE MODES P +7 scene
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/1.8in
OTHER 320x240 24fps Video, SD storage media
POWER 2xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 96 x 29 x 49mm/120g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Resolution, AA batteries accepted
CONS Unspectacular image quality, slow

WDC SCORE 78%

SUMMARY ***OK, but not stunning, a camera made to price rather than specification***

TESTED Oct 2005

£130 Estimated Street Price (£149 RRP) — Nikon 4600

CCD 3.9MP effective
LENS 34-102mm equiv
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/3000sec
ISO Auto
EXPOSURE MODES P, Sc, Mov, ±2EV
FLASH GN 3.3m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Yes/1.8inch
OTHER SD, Best Shot Selector, auto & manual focus, USB
POWER 2x AA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 85 x 60 x 35mm/130g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Simple to use, good price, punchy results
CONS Maybe too basic, difficulty resolving fine detail

WDC SCORE 81%

SUMMARY ***Very basic and easy to use, produces punchy images***

TESTED May 2005

£130 Estimated Street Price (£200 RRP) — Fujifilm E500

CCD 4.1MP
LENS 28-91mm equiv, F2.9-5.5
SHUTTER SPEED 2-1/2000sec
ISO 80, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M, Auto, 4 Sc modes
FLASH 4.1m(W)-2.0m(T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.0in LCD
OTHER PictBridge, USB 1.1, xD-Picture cards
POWER 2xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 101 x 60.5 x 32.6mm/225g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Handling, features, price
CONS Slow connection, purple fringing

WDC SCORE 82%

SUMMARY ***It's got a lot going for it but is let down by the image quality***

TESTED Feb 2005

£140 Estimated Street Price (£230 RRP) — Fujifilm S3500

CCD 4.0MP
LENS 39-234mm f2.8-8.2
SHUTTER SPEED 2-1/1500sec
ISO Auto between 64 and 250
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Prog AE, four scene modes
FLASH Built-in, GN 10
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.5in
OTHER xD, +/-0.6 EV, 320x240 video in 60sec clips, Pictbridge
POWER 4xAA alkaline supplied or rechargeable Ni-MH cells
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 99x77.3x69.3mm/285g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Easy to use, good metering
CONS Barrelling, EVF and LCD freeze while focusing

WDC SCORE 79%

SUMMARY ***An uncomplicated point and shooter with a long lens***

TESTED Awards 04

£140 Estimated Street Price (£200 RRP) — KonicaMinolta Z10

CCD 3.2MP
LENS 36-290mm
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec & B
ISO Auto, 64,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M, Auto, Sc
FLASH 5.2m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Dual EVF/ 1.5in
OTHER SD card, Movie w/sound, 1.5fps
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 109 x 82 x 94mm/400g

3 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality, features
CONS Recording time, small LCD

WDC SCORE 84%

SUMMARY ***The Z0-range is improving and is versatile but don't expect fine art prints***

TESTED Nov 2004

£160 Estimated Street Price (£250 RRP) — Olympus Mju-Mini

CCD 4MP
LENS 35-70mm
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/1000sec
ISO 64, 100, 200, 400 (500 for candle scene mode)
EXPOSURE MODES P, Sc (13), Mov
FLASH GN 5.4m @wide/auto
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/1.8in
OTHER xD, unlimited video/sound, weatherproof, 6 colours
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 95x 55.5 x 27.5mm/115g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Design, ease of use, colours
CONS Limited functions, limited zoom, handling

WDC SCORE 81%

SUMMARY ***A reasonable snapper, it is cool and classy but limited for the enthusiast***

TESTED Special 04

£160 Estimated Street Price (£239 RRP) — Canon A520

CCD 4.2MP total, 4.0MP effective
LENS 34-140mm (equiv) f2.6 – 5.5
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES M, A, S, P, 5 pic modes, 8 scene modes
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/1.8-inch LCD
OTHER SD
POWER 2x AA cells
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91 x 64 x 38.5mm/180g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Accomplished performer
CONS Could be quicker and quieter

WDC SCORE 86%

SUMMARY ***Assured performace by a capable camera, producing fine images***

TESTED July 2005

£170 Estimated Street Price (£199 RRP) — KonicaMinolta Z20

CCD 5.2MP Total 5.0MP effective
LENS 36-290mm f/3.2-3.4
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO 50-320
EXPOSURE MODES P, A,S,M + 5 Scene modes
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.5in 130,000 pixels
OTHER SD slot
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 109 x 82 x 94mm/300g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Speed of handling
CONS Length of telephoto lens

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***A great camera, although the lens is less capable at telephoto position***

TESTED June 2005

£170 Estimated Street Price (£199 RRP) — HP R717

CCD 6.4MP total, 6.2MP effective
LENS 39-117mm equiv f2.8-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 16 – 1/2000th sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 320
EXPOSURE MODES: A, AP, 10 scene modes
FLASH Built in 5m (W) 2.8m (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/1.8in
OTHER SD/MMC, 32Mb int, USB, 320x240pixel MPEG1 movies
POWER Li-ion battery
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 98.5 x 35.3 x60mm/180g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Ease of use, Real Imaging Technology
CONS Limited macro mde, images lack punch

WDC SCORE 83%

SUMMARY ***Easy to operate, but speed and picture quality are not perfect***

TESTED Aug 2005

£180 Estimated Street Price (£200 RRP) — Panasonic LZ1

CCD 4.2MP CCD, 4.0 MP effective
LENS 37-222mm
SHUTTER SPEED 8 – 1/2000sec
ISO A, 64, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Program, Scene modes, Mov
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2in LCD
OTHER SD, Image stabilisation
POWER 2x AA (NiMH recommended)
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 101 x 64 x 33mm/224g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Zoom range, image stabilisation, price
CONS Focus can miss sometimes, low ISO

WDC SCORE 88%

SUMMARY ***Good specifications and features make this a great-value camera***

TESTED June 2005

£180 Estimated Street Price (£229 RRP) — KonicaMinolta X60

CCD 5.4MP total /5.0 MP effective
LENS 38-114mm (equiv) f/3.3 – 4.0
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/1000sec
ISO A, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES A, P, 6 scene modes
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.5in LCD
OTHER 15Mb internal memory, SD, 3 filters
POWER Li-ion cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 83.5 x 56 x 22mm/115g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Large LCD size, fast startup
CONS Limited features, image noise

WDC SCORE 83%

SUMMARY ***Despite limited features, this is quick, easy to operate and capable***

TESTED Sept 2005

£180 Estimated Street Price (£230 RRP) — Ricoh R1V

CCD 5.2MP (total) 5.1MP (Effective)
LENS 28-135mm equiv f/3.3-4.8
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/2000sec
ISO 64-800 plus auto
EXPOSURE MODES: P, plus 6 Scene modes
FLASH Built-in GN 9m at ISO100
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR 1.8in LCD
OTHER 1cm macro focusing, text recording mode
POWER 2xAA/Lilon cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 100 x 55 x 25mm/150g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Build, focal length range, excellent macro
CONS Images a bit grainy

WDC SCORE 83%

SUMMARY ***Well built, with decent feature set, image grain is disappointing***

TESTED May 2005

£180 Estimated Street Price (£349 RRP) — Nikon 4800

CCD 4.0MP eff
LENS 36-300mm f/2.7 – f/4.4
SHUTTER SPEED 4 – 1/2000th sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Program & 11 scene modes
FLASH GN 12
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF / 1.8in
OTHER SD/MMC, 13.5MB internal, USB2.0 (Full Speed),640x480 video
POWER EN-EL1 Li-ion battery pack (supplied)
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 106 x 66 x 54mm/255g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Handling, excellent optics, metering and AF
CONS Plastic build, noisy images

WDC SCORE 80%

SUMMARY ***Impressively specified in a a small body, but images are noisy***

TESTED Feb 2005

THE BUYERS' GUIDE

cameras up to £200

£190 Estimated Street Price (£199 RRP) — Acer CR8530

CCD 8.1MP effective
LENS 36-108mm f2.8-4.8
SHUTTER SPEED 1/2 – 1/500 sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Program, A, S, M, 3 scene modes
FLASH 0.5m –2.7m range
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.5in
OTHER SD/MMC
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91 x 57 x 27mm /150g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Price, wide range of features
CONS Menu hard to see, restricting features

SUMMARY ***Decent feature set but controls are fiddly and picture quality variable***

WDC SCORE **78%** TESTED Sept 2005

£190 Estimated Street Price (£300 RRP) — Canon Ixus i5

CCD 5.4MP (total) 5.03MP (Effective)
LENS 39mm equiv f/2.8
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/1500sec
ISO 50-400 plus auto
EXPOSURE MODES A, P plus 5 Scene modes
FLASH Built-in GN 5.6m on Auto ISO
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR No viewfinder/1.5in LCD
OTHER 640x480 10fps movie mode
POWER 2x AA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 90 x 47 x 18.5mm/100g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Design, Small size
CONS Fixed focal-length lens

SUMMARY ***A pocket-sized gem, though unfortunately lacking an optical zoom***

WDC SCORE **81%** TESTED May 2005

£200 Estimated Street Price (£350 RRP) — Konica Minolta Z3

CCD 4.0MP effective
LENS 35-420mm
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/1000sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, M,A,S,P, 5 Scene
FLASH GN 11
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Electronic TTL-viewfinder (EVF)
OTHER SD card, Anti-Shake system
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 108x5x80x83.5mm/335g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Excellent zoom lens, Anti-Shake, Good exposures
CONS Resolution for its price

SUMMARY ***Careful use should deliver good images for most purposes***

WDC SCORE **84%** TESTED Dec 04

£190 Estimated Street Price (£199 RRP) — Fujifilm F440

CCD 4MP
LENS 38-380mm f2.8 – 5.5
SHUTTER SPEED 2-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 80, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Program, 4 scene modes
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2in
OTHER xD storage
POWER Li-ion NP-30 rechargeable
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 74.5 x 62.3 x 21.3mm/150g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Compact, large LCD, quick focusing
CONS Limited features, noise at high ISO

SUMMARY ***Stylish, small and quick, producing good quality images***

WDC SCORE **85%** TESTED May 2005

£190 Estimated Street Price (£249 RRP) — Pentax WP

CCD 5MP (Effective)
LENS f3.3-4.0 / 38-114mm
SHUTTER SPEED 4 – 1/2000 sec
ISO Auto, 100-400
EXPOSURE MODES Program, 18 Sc, Mov
FLASH 0.13m - 2.5m range
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR No viewfinder/2-inch TFT colour
OTHER SD, Underwater to 5m
POWER Lithium-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 102 x 51 x 22mm/120g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Relatively simple, good underwater camera
CONS No underwater white balance, reliance on scenes

SUMMARY ***There are better cameras, but this is quirky and fun, a holiday camera***

WDC SCORE **83%** TESTED Sept 2005

£200 Estimated Street Price (£350 RRP) — Kodak Dx7630

CCD 6.1MP eff
LENS 39-117mm equiv.
SHUTTER SPEED 64-1/1000sec
ISO 100, 200, 400, 800
EXPOSURE MODES: P, A, S, M, Scenes
FLASH GN 4.2m @auto/wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.2in
OTHER QuickTime movie mode
POWER 3.7V Li-ion battery
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 103 x 69.2 x 40.2mm/ /219g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Quick accurate AF, build, ergonomic design
CONS Only 3x zoom, tiny viewfinder, zoom control

SUMMARY ***Compact, easy to use and produces very good images***

WDC SCORE **85%** TESTED Aug 2004

£190 Estimated Street Price (£250 RRP) — Olympus mju Mini S

CCD 5.4MP (total) 5MP (Effective)
LENS 35-70mm (equiv) f/3.5-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 1/2-1/1000sec
ISO 64-400 plus auto
EXPOSURE MODES P, Sc, Movie
FLASH Built-in GN 5.4
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR No viewfinder/1.8in LCD
OTHER xD, Histogram, three colours
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 95 x 55.5 x 275mm/115g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Black finish very tactile
CONS Images better then expected but not perfect

SUMMARY ***Style over substance, adequate images with some decent features***

WDC SCORE **81%** TESTED July 2005

£190 Estimated Street Price (£279 RRP) — Sony W5

CCD 5.25MP CCD, 5.1 MP effective
LENS f2.8-5.2 38-114 mm
SHUTTER SPEED 30 – 1/1000sec
ISO Auto, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Program, Manual, 7 scene modes
FLASH Built in 0.2-4.5 (W) 0.3-2.5 (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.5-inch
OTHER MS, MS Pro, 32Mb int
POWER Nikon EN-EL8
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91 x 60 x 37.1mm/253g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS LCD screen, fast operation, sturdy build
CONS No separate playback button, less effective in low light

SUMMARY ***Sturdy, quick and produces good images – a family compact***

WDC SCORE **86%** TESTED Aug 2005

£200 Estimated Street Price (£275 RRP) — Olympus IR-300

CCD 5MP
LENS 38-114mm f3.3-4.0
SHUTTER SPEED 4 - 1/2000 sec
ISO Auto
EXPOSURE MODES: P, plus 17 Scene modes
FLASH 0.3m-2.6m (W) 0.5m-2.1m (T) GN 6.0
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2in
OTHER xD
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 99 x 53 x 22mm /112g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Lightweight, easy to operate
CONS No ISO control, editing features fair, manual on the CD

SUMMARY ***Takes decent photos, but overall a very average, over-priced camera***

WDC SCORE **82%** TESTED Oct 2005

£190 Estimated Street Price (£300 RRP) — Fujifilm S5500

CCD 4MP
LENS 37-370mm
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 64-400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, Auto, Sc
FLASH GN14
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.5in LCD
OTHER xD storage, RAW mode
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 113x81x79mm/480g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Great spec, sensible controls, RAW mode
CONS Close focus distance, weird colour artefacts

SUMMARY ***Useful features but slow ISO speed and long lens needs bright light***

WDC SCORE **81%** TESTED Jan 05

£195 Estimated Street Price (£320 RRP) — Canon A95

CCD 5.0MP effective
LENS 38–114mmf2/8-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P,A,S,M, 6 subject, 8 scene modes
FLASH GN 11
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/1.8in
OTHER CF I&II, 2fps, up to 18-frame buffer, 640x480 video
POWER 4xAA alkaline supplied, or Ni-MH rechargeable batteries
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 101x64.6x38mm/235g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Easy to use, excellent metering, full spec
CONS AiAF niggles, slow startup, lacks TIFF & RAW

SUMMARY ***A great little performer with a great little price tag***

WDC SCORE **86%** TESTED Special 04

£200 Estimated Street Price (£380 RRP) — Fujifilm E550

CCD 6.3MP
LENS 32.5 – 130 mm
SHUTTER SPEED 3sec-1/2000sec
ISO 80/100/200/400/800
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M,Sc, Mov, ±2EV
FLASH 4.5m (W) 2.2m (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/2in
OTHER xD, ISO 800 @3MP Resolution
POWER 2xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 105x 63 x 34.4 mm/200g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS 6MP sensor, LCD, handling
CONS 12MP output quality, noise above ISO200

SUMMARY ***A rather nice camera with plenty of options for the enthusiast***

WDC SCORE **85%** TESTED Jan 2005

£190 Estimated Street Price (£350 RRP) — Canon Ixus 40

CCD 4.0 MP effective
LENS 35 - 105mm f/2.8 – f/4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 15 – 1/1500th sec
ISO Auto, 50/100/200/400
EXPOSURE MODES: Auto, P, M, 7 Scene modes, +/-2EV
FLASH GN 11
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2in
OTHER SD/MMC, 640x480 30fps video, USB, Pictbridge
POWER NB-4L Li-ion rechargeable battery pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 86 x 53 x 20.7mm/130g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Great image quality, metering & AF, manual control
CONS Blurred viewfinder, weak memory card bay cover

SUMMARY ***Small, stylish and simple, yet capable of excellent results***

WDC SCORE **86%** TESTED Apr 2005

£200 Estimated Street Price (£280 RRP) — Olympus Mju 500

CCD 5MP effective
LENS 35-105mm f/3.1-5.6
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/1000sec
ISO 64-640
EXPOSURE MODES P, Sc, Mov, ±2EV
FLASH GN 7.8
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/ 2.5in TFT
OTHER xD, PictBridge, 1.5fps for 4 frames
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 99 x 55.5 x 31mm/165g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Build quality, image colour & sharpness, LCD
CONS Some image noise, limited control

SUMMARY ***Weatherproof and simple to use, with a great LCD screen***

WDC SCORE **87%** TESTED Apr 2005

£210 Estimated Street Price (£250 RRP) — Pentax S5z

CCD 5MP
LENS 35 - 107mm f/2.6 – 4.8
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000 sec
ISO A, 80, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P, 15 scene modes
FLASH 0.2-3.5m (W) 0.2-3m (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.5in LCD
OTHER Pictbridge, SD, 9.3Mb int
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 83 x 52 x 21.5mm/120g

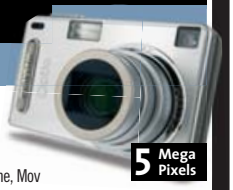
5 Mega Pixels

PROS Big range of scene modes, small dimensions
CONS LCD hard to see in sun, slow start, plastic tripod bush

SUMMARY ***Capable of some good shots, but it isn't very fast***

WDC SCORE **83%** TESTED Oct 2005

£210 Estimated Street Price (£250 RRP) — Pentax SVi



CCD 5.0MP effective
LENS 36-180mm (equiv) f/2.8 – 4.7
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000 sec
ISO A, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, 12 Scene, Mov
FLASH 0.12-4.2m (W), 0.6-2.5m (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/1.8in
OTHER SD, nine filters
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91.5 x 56 x 28mm/165g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Feature set, Pentax lens
CONS Plastic tripod bush, fiddly mode dial

WDC SCORE 84%

SUMMARY ***Good-looking camera with decent lens and feature set***

TESTED Oct 2005

£210 Estimated Street Price (£260 RRP) — Kodak Z740

CCD 5.36MP CCD, 5.0MP effective
LENS 38-380mm f2.8-3.7
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/1000sec
ISO Auto plus ISO 80,100, 200, 400, 800
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M, 16 Scene, Mov
FLASH Built in GN 10.6
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Electronic/1.8in
OTHER SD/MMC, 35Mb internal storage, USB and 640 x 480 movie
POWER 2x AA, 1x CR-V3 or EasyShare dock with Ni-MH battery pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 97.6 x 77.5 x 72mm/287g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS 10x optical zoom, comfortable to hold
CONS Fringing, no manual white balance, fiddly joystick

WDC SCORE 82%

SUMMARY ***Easy to use with plenty of features, some image quality issues***

TESTED May 2005

£210 Estimated Street Price (£279 RRP) — Casio EX-Z57

CCD 5MP eff
LENS 35-105mm, f2.6-4.8
SHUTTER SPEED 4sec-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 50,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P, BestShot modes
FLASH Built in 0.2-2.6m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.7inch
OTHER MS, MS Pro
POWER Superlife Rechargeable Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 87 x 58 x 22.5mm/130g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Compact size, BestShot modes, battery life
CONS No AV connection, lack of space around back

WDC SCORE 83%

SUMMARY ***Not the easiest to operate, but a decent camera with satisfactory results***

TESTED Aug 2005

£210 Estimated Street Price (£300 RRP) — Samsung V700

CCD 7.1MP eff
LENS 38-114mm equiv
SHUTTER SPEED 15sec-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 50,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M, Sc,Mov, ±2EV
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Yes/1.8inch
OTHER SD, Composite mode, PictBridge, Histogram USB2
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 56.5x105x29.5mm/150g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Good noise control, plenty of features
CONS Difficult to use features effectively, artefacts

WDC SCORE 80%

SUMMARY ***Packed with features, tricky to operate and images are over processed***

TESTED May 2005

£220 Estimated Street Price (£319 RRP) — Canon IXUS 50

CCD 5MP eff
LENS 35-105mm f2.8-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 15 – 1/500 sec
ISO Auto, 50,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES A, M, 6 scene modes
FLASH 0.5m –3.5m (W) / 2.0 (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/ 2.0-inch
OTHER SD
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 86 x 53 x 20.7mm/130g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Sturdy build, quick operation
CONS Limited manual features, camera shake possible

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***Lacks advanced features, but generally pleasing results and decent build***

TESTED Oct 2005

£220 Estimated Street Price (£400 RRP) — Olympus C-770

CCD 4MP
LENS 38-380mm
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/1000sec
ISO Auto, 64,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M,Sc(9), Mov, ±2EV
FLASH Auto, redeye reduction, forced, suppressed, slow sync
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.8in LCD
OTHER xD, MPEG4 Panorama assist, flash compensation
POWER Li-Ion, AC Adaptor included
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 104.5 x 60 x 68.5mm/300g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Compact, well made, MPEG4, good LCD
CONS Heavy, similar to other models in the range

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***At the moment the C770 stands alone in its niche and stands proud***

TESTED Sep 2004

£220 Estimated Street Price (£280RRP) — Nikon S1

CCD 5.36MP total, 5.0MP effective
LENS 35-105mm f/3.0 – f/5.4
SHUTTER SPEED 1 – 1/350 sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Program, 13 scene, 4 scene assist
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR No viewfinder / 2.5in
OTHER SD, 12MB internal
POWER Nikon EN-EL8
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 89.9 x 57.5 x 19.mm/118g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Large LCD screen, easy to operate, D-lighting
CONS Often tricky macro focusing, eats battery power

WDC SCORE 84%

SUMMARY ***Stylish and easy to use with limited features***

TESTED July 2005

£200 Estimated Street Price (£240 RRP) — Panasonic LZ2

CCD 5.36MP total, 5MP effective
LENS 37-222mm f/2.8-4.5
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/2000sec
ISO 64-400
EXPOSURE MODES Program, Sc, Mov
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR 2in LCD
OTHER SD, Image Stabilisation
POWER 2x AA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 101 x 64 x 33mm/224g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Lens, price, image stabilisation
CONS Some image noise, bulkier than most compacts

WDC SCORE 88%

SUMMARY ***Fantastic lens and good colour at very reasonable price***

TESTED July 2005

£230 Estimated Street Price (£299RRP) — Sony P200

CCD 7.2MP effective
LENS 38-114mm f/2.8 – f/5.2
SHUTTER SPEED 30 – 1/1000th sec
ISO Auto, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Program & 9 scene modes
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical / 2.0-inch TFT
OTHER MS, MS Pro
POWER InfoLITHIUM NP-FR1
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 104 x 51.5 x 27.9mm/180g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Fast, good-quality images, build
CONS LCD visibility in bright sunlight

WDC SCORE 84%

SUMMARY ***Impressively specified in a small body, but images are noisy***

TESTED July 2005

£230 Estimated Street Price (£329 RRP) — Sony W7

CCD 7.4MP total, 7.0MP effective
LENS 38-114mm f2.8-5.2
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 100-400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, M, 6 scene modes
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Opt/2.5inch
OTHER MS, slot, 32Mb internal
POWER 2x AA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91 x 60 x 37.1mm/ 253g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Great performer all round
CONS High-resolution images

WDC SCORE 86%

SUMMARY ***Good specs and handling, great images, use a tripod in low light levels***

TESTED July 2005

£230 Estimated Street Price (£299 RRP) — Fujifilm Finepix F10

CCD 6.63 Total 6.3MP effective
LENS 36-108mm f/2.8-5
SHUTTER SPEED 3-1/2000sec
ISO 80-1600
EXPOSURE MODES Program, Scene, Mov
FLASH Built-in 4m(W)-6.5m(T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.5in LCD
OTHER xD storage
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 92 x 58 x 27.3mm/200g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Big LCD, handling, low-light performance
CONS Little manual control, no RAW

WDC SCORE 87%

SUMMARY ***Stylish, responsive, producing excellent images. Good ISO performance***

TESTED June 2005

£240 Estimated Street Price (£400 RRP) — Sony T3

CCD 5.1MP effective
LENS 38-114mm f/3.5-4.4
SHUTTER SPEED 1-1/1000sec
ISO Auto plus ISO 100, 200 and 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, program, Sc (8)
FLASH Built-in GN 7.5m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR 2.5in LCD
OTHER MS Duo
POWER LiIon 3.6V 680mAh rechargeable
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91x60x18mm/171g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Design, good user control, good macro, LCD
CONS Exposure modes rather limiting

WDC SCORE 86%

SUMMARY ***Combines good looks with excellent performance***

TESTED Feb 2005

£240 Estimated Street Price (£320 RRP) — Nikon S2

CCD 5.1MP effective
LENS 35-105mm equivalent) f/3-5.4
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/2000sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, 15 Sc, Mov
FLASH 0.3-2.5m (Wide/ISO Auto), 0.3-1.4m(Tele/ISO Auto)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/ 2.5in
OTHER SD, all weather, USB camera dock
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91.9 x 59 x 22mm/140g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Good front design, good scene modes, all-weather
CONS Cramped back, corner sharpness, lens distortion

WDC SCORE 80%

SUMMARY ***Looks great, but let down by image quality and handling issues***

TESTED Sept 2005

£240 Estimated Street Price (£480 RRP) — Canon S1-IS

CCD 3.2MP (eff)
LENS 38–380mm (equiv)
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES P,A, S, M, auto, six scene
FLASH GN 12m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.5in TFT
OTHER CF storage, IS, Flexizone Focus
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 110x78x66mm/370g

3 Mega Pixels

PROS Image stabiliser is good for 10x zoom. Good AF
CONS Expensive for 3MP model, resolution

WDC SCORE 81%

SUMMARY ***The camera for those for whom resolution is not the be all and end all***

TESTED July 2004

£240 Estimated Street Price (£299 RRP) — Fujifilm Z1

CCD 5.1MP effective
LENS 36-108mm f/3.5-8.3
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/1000sec
ISO Auto, 64-800
EXPOSURE MODES P + 5 Scene
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/ 2.5in LCD
OTHER 640x480 15fps Video, xD
POWER Lithium ion cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 90 x 55 x 18.6mm/130g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Design, ease of use, build quality
CONS Limited overrides, some lens distortion

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***Attractive, pretty fast and capable of decent pictures***

TESTED Oct 2005

THE BUYERS' GUIDE

cameras £300 - £400

£250 Estimated Street Price (£300 RRP) — Panasonic FX8

CCD 5MP
LENS 35-105mm f/2.8-5.6
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/2000sec
ISO 80-400
EXPOSURE MODES Program AE, 12 Sc, Mov
FLASH 0.3-4.0m (Wide/ISO Auto), 0.3-2.2m (Tele/ISO Auto)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.5in LCD
OTHER SD, Image Stabilisation (OIS), continuous shooting
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 94.1 x 50.5 x 24.2mm/155g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Mega OIS, LCD, video, simplicity
CONS Cramped thumb space, average image quality

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***Competent lifestyle camera with great movie mode and stabilisation***

TESTED Sept 2005

£250 Estimated Street Price (£300 RRP) — Ricoh Caplio GX8

CCD 8.5MP Total, 8.2MP effective
LENS 28-85mm (equivalent) f/2.5-4.34
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/2000sec
ISO 60-1600
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, A, M, six Scene
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/1.8in
OTHER SD slot
POWER 2xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 113.6 x 58 x 29mm/205g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Lens, build, features
CONS Power consumption, LCD colour cast

WDC SCORE 81%

SUMMARY ***Good lens, features and build. But it is power hungry and the LCD is poor***

TESTED Aug 2005

£250 Estimated Street Price (£320 RRP) — Nikon Coolpix 7900

CCD 7.41MP CCD, 7.1MP effective
LENS 38-114mm f2.8-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000sec
ISO A, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Program, scene modes, ±2 EV
FLASH Built in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical / 2in
OTHER SD, JPEG, 3 metering modes, D-Light, red-eye removal
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 88 x 60 x 36.5mm/150g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Small, high resolution, good image noise control
CONS Image detail and sharpening, AF

WDC SCORE 83%

SUMMARY ***Contains innovative features, but produces overprocessed images***

TESTED June 2005

£250 Estimated Street Price (£480 RRP) — Fujifilm F810

CCD 6.3MP effective, 12.3MP output
LENS 35.5-142mm (equiv) f/2.8-5.6
SHUTTER SPEED 3-1/2000sec
ISO Automatic, ISO 80, 100, 200, 400, 800
EXPOSURE MODES P,A, S, M, four Scene
FLASH GN 11m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical /2.1inch
OTHER xD card, widescreen 16:9 format images, RAW mode
POWER Lilon rechargeable cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 109.5x54x29mm/200g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Good 6MP image quality, lovely build quality
CONS 12MP output, highlights blowing out

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***Use at the 6MP setting for the best results and you won't be disappointed***

TESTED Dec 2004

£265 Estimated Street Price (£330 RRP) — Casio EX-Z750

CCD 7.4MP total, 7.2MP effective
LENS 38-114mm f2.8-5.1
SHUTTER SPEED 60-1/6000sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES Snapshot, M, A, S, 30 scene
FLASH Built-in GN8
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/2.5in
OTHER SD
POWER Li-Ion cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 89 x 58.5 x 22.5mm/ 127g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Movie modes, scene modes
CONS LCD, Colour accuracy, images no better than 5MP

WDC SCORE 82%

SUMMARY ***Good movie and scene modes, extra pixels contribute little***

TESTED July 2005

£265 Estimated Street Price (£449 RRP) — Canon S60

CCD 5MP
LENS 28-100mm f2.8-5.3
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 50,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P,A,S,M, 6 Sc
FLASH GN 12
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/1.8in
OTHER CF I&II, 2fps, 8-frame buffer, 640x480 video
POWER NB-2LH Li-Ion battery pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 114 x 56.5 x 38.8mm/ 230g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Handling, excellent wide zoom optics & metering
CONS AiAF niggles, some noise in Superfine mode

WDC SCORE 84%

SUMMARY ***Sophisticated camera, chunkier than most, with a usefully wide lens***

TESTED Nov 2004

£270 Estimated Street Price (£299 RRP) — Olympus mju800

CCD Total 8.3MP, Effective 8.0MP
LENS 38-114mm f/2.8-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 64-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S +19 scene
FLASH Built-in, Auto plus 3 modes
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/ 2.5in LCD
OTHER 640x480 15fps Video, xD card and 19MB int
POWER Lithium ion cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 103 x 58 x 33mm/181.5g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality, LCD screen, build quality
CONS Left-hand backplate button visibility in bright sun

WDC SCORE 86%

SUMMARY ***Good looking camera, producing high-quality images***

TESTED Oct 2005

£270 Estimated Street Price (£350 RRP) — Konica Minolta Z5

CCD 5.2MP total, 5MP effective
LENS 35-420mm f2.8-4.5
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/1000sec
ISO Auto, 50,100,200,320
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, M, S, 5 scene
FLASH Built in GN 8
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Electronic viewfinder/2.0inch LCD
OTHER SD, MMC, USB 2.0, 640 x 480 movie
POWER 4x AA cells
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 108.5 x 80 x 84mm/ 340g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS LCD size, 12x opt zoom, anti-shake
CONS Noise at higher ISOs, LCD in bright sunlight

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***Sophisticated camera, chunkier than most, with a usefully wide lens***

TESTED July 2005

£280 Estimated Street Price (£349 RRP) — Sony T7

CCD 5.1MP effective
LENS 38-114mm f3.5-4.4
SHUTTER SPEED 1/8-1/1000sec
ISO 64-400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Scene modes, Mov
FLASH Built in 0.1-2.6, Tele: 0.5-2.1
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Opt/2.5-inch
OTHER Memory Stick Duo, MPEG 1, Pict Bridge, USB 2.0
POWER Info Lithium
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91.7 x 60.2 x 14.7mm/114g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Good image quality, good looks
CONS Poor documentation, small and fiddly

WDC SCORE 80%

SUMMARY ***Competent performer, but fiddly to operate and needs a decent manual***

TESTED Aug 2005

£285 Estimated Street Price (£350 RRP) — Panasonic FZ5

CCD 5.0MP effective
LENS 36-432mm f/2.8-3.3
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/1000sec
ISO Auto plus ISO 80,100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P,SA,S,M, nine Scene & macro, Mov
FLASH Built-in flash, GN12.6m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF, 1.8in
OTHER SD/MMC, movie with sound at 320x240 pixels, 30 10 15fps
POWER 8.4V 680mAh Lithium Ion rechargeable cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 108x68.4x84.8mm /290g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Great zoom range, excellent lens
CONS Noise in low light

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***One of the best megazoom cameras around, producing good results***

TESTED May 2005

£285 Estimated Street Price (£400RRP) — Canon Ixus 700

CCD 7.1MP effective
LENS 37-114mm f/2.8-4.9
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO Auto plus ISO 80,100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, Prog, scene, movie
FLASH 50cm-5m(W)/ 3m (T) at ISO Auto
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Opt/2.0-inch
OTHER SD, histogram, PictBridge
POWER Lithium Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 89.5 x 57 x 26.5mm /170g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Design, good image quality, quick
CONS Manual controls are limited

WDC SCORE 87%

SUMMARY ***One of the better 7MP models; excellent images with easy operation***

TESTED July 2005

£290 Estimated Street Price (£450 RRP) — Canon S70

CCD 7.4MP total (7.1MP effective)
LENS 28-100mm f/2.8-5.3
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO Auto plus ISO 50,100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, 6 scene modes, Mov
FLASH Built-in flash, GN 11.8m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical, 1.8in LCD
OTHER CF I or II, Movie recording, Pictbridge
POWER 7.4V 750mAh Lithium Ion rechargeable cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 114 x 56.5 x 38.8mm/230g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS True wideangle lens, close focusing quality
CONS Exposures can be a little dark

WDC SCORE 86%

SUMMARY ***Some minor niggles, but this fully-featured camera is impressive***

TESTED May 2005

£300 Estimated Street Price (£380 RRP) — Kyocera M410R

CCD 4.1MP eff
LENS 37–370mm f2.8-8
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/2000sec
ISO Auto,100,200,400,800
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P, A, S, 4 Scene
FLASH GN 9m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF / 1.5in
OTHER SD, 3fps continuous shooting
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 107 x 73 x 40.5mm/295g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Continuous shooting, 10x zoom
CONS Slightly blocky images at times

WDC SCORE 85%

SUMMARY ***A lot of innovations and it does what it does very well***

TESTED Sep 2004

£300 Estimated Street Price (£399 RRP) — Olympus C70

CCD 7.1MP
LENS 38-190mm equiv, (5x zoom) F2.8-4.8
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000se
ISO 80, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, 5 scene modes
FLASH 3.8m(W)-2.2m(T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.0" LCD
OTHER PictBridge, USB 1.1, xD-Picture cards
POWER LI-12B 3.7V Lithium rechargeable battery
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 102 x 59 x 42.4mm/220g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Build quality, design, image quality
CONS Lousy zoom control, over-complicated menu

WDC SCORE 89%

SUMMARY ***A well-built camera with some great features but has flaws***

TESTED Apr 2005

£300 Estimated Street Price (£500 RRP) — Casio P700

CCD 7.1MP eff
LENS 33-132mm
SHUTTER SPEED 60-1/200 & B
ISO Auto, 80-640
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, BestShot, Mov
FLASH GN 3.6m W 2.5mT
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2in TFT
OTHER SD, 9MB internal, calendar, album, world clock, alarm
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 98 x 68 x 45mm/225g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Features, handling, design
CONS Vignetting, SD compatibility, slight noise problems

WDC SCORE 88%

SUMMARY ***A fun camera, bursting with feeatures that delivers the goods***

TESTED Jan 2005

£310 Estimated Street Price (£700 RRP) — Fujifilm S7000

CCD 6.3MP (12MP Output)
LENS 35–210mm
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/2000sec
ISO 160,200,400,800
EXPOSURE MODES P, SP, AP, M, auto, Sc, Mov
FLASH GN 3m@auto/wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.8in
OTHER Cable release socket, A/V out, xD,CF
POWER Rechargeable AA NiMH inc
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 121x97x82mm/590g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS High resolution, build quality, RAW files
CONS Macro button position, no PC socket

SUMMARY **The additional resolution is a great boon. Great handling and control**

WDC SCORE 88%
TESTED Awards 03

£320 Estimated Street Price (£339 RRP) — Casio Exilim Pro EX-P505

CCD 5.25MP CCD, 5.0 MP effective
LENS 38-190mm f3.3-3.6
SHUTTER SPEED 60 – 1/2000sec
ISO A, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, Auto, 22 Scene modes
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR No viewfinder /2in flip and twist LCD
OTHER SD, MMC, 7.5Mb internal memory
POWER SUPERLIFE lithium-ion cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 98.5 x 55.5 x 73.5mm/ 215g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Fast focus & start-up, compact size, 5x zoom
CONS Cramped controls, poor build, excessive noise

SUMMARY **Great on paper, but the build and high incidence of noise disappoint**

WDC SCORE 80%
TESTED June 2005

£320 Estimated Street Price (£400 RRP) — Sony H1

CCD 5.1 MP effective
LENS 36-432mm f2.8-3.7
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/2000sec
ISO Auto, 64, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P, A, S, M, 7 scene modes
FLASH 0.3m – 6.8m (W) 0.9 - 5.2m (T)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Electronic/ 2.5-inch
OTHER 640 x 480 movie, 2cm macro, MS, MSPro, 32Mb internal
POWER 2x AA cells
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 108 x 81.4 x 91.2mm/ 590.8g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS 12x optical zoom, feature set, build quality
CONS Lacks some pro features such as RAW

SUMMARY **Zoom and features ensure there is plenty for the enthusiast**

WDC SCORE 85%
TESTED Sept 2005

£340 Estimated Street Price (£469 RRP) — Canon S2 IS

CCD 5.0MP effective
LENS 38-432mm f/2.8-3.1
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/3200sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, auto, plus 6 scene modes
FLASH Built-in pop-up
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF / 1.8inch
OTHER SD, Flexizone focus, Image Stabilisation
POWER 4xAA
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 113 x 78 x 75.5mm/405g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Good AF, Image stabiliser ideal for 12x zoom
CONS Bit bulky, bit pricey, only saves to JPEG

SUMMARY **Fast, good metering, focusing and stabilisation. Often unusual fringing**

WDC SCORE 81%
TESTED Aug 2005

£360 Estimated Street Price (£499 RRP) — Olympus Camedia C-7070

CCD 7.4MP Total 7.1MP effective
LENS 27-110mm equivalent) f/2.4-4.8
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/4000sec
ISO Auto, plus 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M + 7 Scene
FLASH Built in/Hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/ 1.8in LCD
OTHER xD and CF slots
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 116 x 87 x 65.5mm/433g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality
CONS Function finding

SUMMARY **Very capable, good image quality and lens performance**

WDC SCORE 86%
TESTED June 2005

£370 Estimated Street Price (£549 RRP) — Konica Minolta A200

CCD 8.0MP effective
LENS 28-200mm f/2.8 – f/3.5
SHUTTER SPEED 15 – 1/32000 sec
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P,A,S,M,4 Sc
FLASH Built in/Hotshoe)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/1.8-inch Vari-Angle LCD
OTHER CF Type I/II, 10fps, 40-frame buffer at 640x480
POWER NP-800 Li-ion battery pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 114x80x115mm/505g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Excellent optics & metering, images, handling
CONS AF foibles, sensitive shutter release

SUMMARY **A lot of camera for the price, and easier to use than the A2**

WDC SCORE 88%
TESTED Apr 2005

£370 Estimated Street Price (£650 RRP) — Panasonic FZ20

CCD 5MP effective
LENS 36-432mm
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/2000sec
ISO 80-400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, Sc, ±2EV
FLASH Built in/Hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF / 2.0" LCD
OTHER SD, Mega OIS, live histogram, 3fps over seven frames
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 127.6x87.2x106.2mm/520g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality, lens, handling
CONS No RAW format, fiddly aperture/shutter controls

SUMMARY **Panasonic is proud of its new baby and you'll be a proud owner too**

WDC SCORE 89%
TESTED Dec 2004

£375 Estimated Street Price (£900 RRP) — Canon G6

CCD 7.1MP effective
LENS 35-140mm Max f2.0- f3.0
SHUTTER SPEED 15 – 1/2,000 sec
ISO AUTO, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P,A,S,M,Sc,Mov,
FLASH 70cm-5.0m (W) / 4.0m (T) (at ISO 100 equiv)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Opt/ 2.0in
OTHER CF I/II, +/- 2 EV
POWER Rechargeable Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 104.9 x 72.8 x 73.1 mm / 380g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality, build, handling
CONS Monitor too dark, power switch

SUMMARY **A serious camera to consider as an alternative to a DSLR**

WDC SCORE 89%
TESTED Dec 2004

£380 Estimated Street Price (£499 RRP) — Sony V3

CCD 7.1MP effective
LENS 34-136mm f/2.8-4
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/2000sec & B
ISO 100-800
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M,
FLASH Built-in pop-up, Hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.5in
OTHER Memorystick Pro; CF type I; 300-point metering
POWER InfoLithium
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 120 x 63 x 72mm/390g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Quality build, handling
CONS A bit large for some, perhaps

SUMMARY **Highly specified and capable camera that should last years**

WDC SCORE 87%
TESTED Apr 2005

£400 Estimated Street Price (£1000 RRP) — Pentax 750Z

CCD 7.1MP eff
LENS 37.5-187.5mm
SHUTTER SPEED 15-1/1000th
ISO 80-400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, 12 picture modes
FLASH Range 0.2m-3.5m
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/1.8in
OTHER SD/MMC, PictBridge
POWER Rechargeable Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 100 x 61.5 x 42mm, 210g

7 Mega Pixels

PROS Handling, features, image quality, battery life
CONS Slow start-up and write time, no RAW

SUMMARY **One of the best of the new breed, producing great photos**

WDC SCORE 89%
TESTED Special 04

£410 Estimated Street Price (£499 RRP) — Sanyo C4

CCD 4.23/4.0 MP
LENS 38-220mm f/3.5 – 3.7
SHUTTER SPEED 4 (lamp mode)-1/2000sec
ISO A, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES P, 6 scene modes
FLASH Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/1.8-inch
OTHER 128Mb and 1Gb SD cards supplied, two filters
POWER Li-ion DB-L20
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 69 x 108 x 34mm/159g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Video and still image capability
CONS Awkward handling

SUMMARY **A useful option for those who want both still and movie capabilities**

WDC SCORE 80%
TESTED Sept 2005

£440 Estimated Street Price (£500 RRP) — Sony CD500

CCD 5.24MP
LENS 34–102mm
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/1000sec
ISO 100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, Sc, Mov
FLASH GN 5m@auto/wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/2.5in
OTHER 52mm filter thread, USB 2.0 transfer,CD
POWER Sony Info Lithium and charger inc
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 139x103x96mm/606g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Cheap storage, fully featured, fast shutter
CONS Minor image quality concerns, slow playback

SUMMARY **A joy to use. Cost of memory is a bonus. Everything most will need**

WDC SCORE 82%
TESTED Oct 2003

£440 Estimated Street Price (£1000 RRP) — Canon Pro 1

CCD 8.0MP effective
LENS 28-200mm USM L
SHUTTER SPEED 1/5-1/4000sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, Sc, Mov
FLASH Popup & TTL hotshoe, GN 5m @ ISO100Wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF / 2.0in
OTHER Wireless remote, CF, 2.5fps, RAW, PictBridge
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 117.5x72x90.3mm/545g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Generally good image and lens quality
CONS Zoom control, no live histogram

SUMMARY **Uninspiring design aside, the Pro 1 can achieve good results**

WDC SCORE 83%
TESTED June 2004

£450 Estimated Street Price (£900 RRP) — Nikon 8700

CCD 8MP (eff)
LENS 35-280mm
SHUTTER SPEED 1/8-1/4000 sec & B
ISO Selectable to 50,100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, Sc, Mov
FLASH GN 4m @ Auto/wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF/ 1.8in
OTHER RAW, TIFF, JPEG, sound, custom functions
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 105 x 113 x 78mm/512g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Good image quality at low ISO, lots of features
CONS Noise at ISO 400, handling, fringing

SUMMARY **The 8700 makes good use of the 8MP CCD but handling is poor**

WDC SCORE 78%
TESTED May 2004

£460 Estimated Street Price (£650 RRP) — Nikon 8400

CCD 8MP effective
LENS 24-85mm
SHUTTER SPEED 8-1/3000sec
ISO 50-400
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M, Sc, ±2EV, Mov
FLASH Built-in/hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF /1.8in LCD
OTHER CF, swivel LCD, 2.3fps over five frames, RAW, TIFF, JPEG
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 113.6 x 82.5 x 75mm/400g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS 24mm lens, functional, build quality
CONS Some fringing & noise, overly complicated menus

SUMMARY **A marked improvement on some recent Nikon cameras, very nice**

WDC SCORE 89%
TESTED Jan 2005

£460 Estimated Street Price (£550 RRP) — Pentax *iST DL

CCD 6.31MP, 6.1MP effective
LENS Interchangeable
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec, bulb
ISO 200-3200
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M, Auto, 7 PICT modes
FLASH Pop-up and TTL hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR TTL Optical via Penta Mirror/2.5in
OTHER SD storage, RAW, JPEG
POWER Four AA or 2 CRV-3
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 125 x 92.5 x 67mm/470g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS *Simple to use, great results*
CONS *RAW processing software is limited*
SUMMARY ***Impressive results, positive handling and good build quality***

WDC SCORE **89%** TESTED Sept 2005

£470 Estimated Street Price (£550 RRP) — Nikon D50

CCD 6.24MP/6.1MP effective
LENS Interchangeable
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec, bulb
ISO 200-1600
EXPOSURE MODES Auto,P, A, S, M, Sc
FLASH GN 15m (ISO200), hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Opt/2in LCD
OTHER SD, 3 Colour space, Pict Bridge, USB 2.0
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 133 x 102 x 76mm/540g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS *Simple, image quality, design & build, price*
CONS *Lacks some features like PC socket*
SUMMARY ***Controls are stripped back, but it is easy to use and fast at a good price***

WDC SCORE **87%** TESTED Aug 2005

£499 Estimated Street Price (£499 RRP) — Sanyo C5

CCD 5.3MP Total 5.1MP effective
LENS 38-190mm f/3.5-4.7
SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000sec
ISO Auto (50-200) plus ISO 400 and 800
EXPOSURE MODES Auto + 6 Scene
FLASH Built-in GN 8
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR 2in Vari-Angle LCD
OTHER 1Gb SD included, video image stabilising
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 68 x 108 x 23mm/145g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS *Excellent bright light performance*
CONS *Suspect low-light focusing and noise*
SUMMARY ***Good picture quality in bright sunlight, but struggles in low light***

WDC SCORE **80%** TESTED Aug 2005

£520 Estimated Street Price (£700 RRP) — Nikon 8800

CCD 8.3MP Total/8.0 MP Effective
LENS 35-350mm f/2.8-f/5 (10x zoom)
SHUTTER SPEED 8– 1/3000 sec & B
ISO Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
EXPOSURE MODES Auto; P, A, S, M, Sc, Mov, ±2EV, Custom
FLASH Built in/Hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF, 1.8in Vari-Angle LCD
OTHER CF Type I/II, 2.3fps, PictBridge
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 116 x 85 x 121 mm/680g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS *Lens, compact, handling*
CONS *Image noise, limited sensitivity*
SUMMARY ***Eminently usable and worthy model with good results***

WDC SCORE **86%** TESTED Apr 2005

£530 Estimated Street Price (£900 RRP) — Canon 300D

CMOS 6.3MP
LENS Canon EF interchangeable
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec &Bulb
ISO 100-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, M, SC
FLASH Not stated
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT, 1.8in
OTHER DPOF, Direct Print
POWER Li-Ion with charger
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 142x99x72mm/ 649g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS *Price, Image quality*
CONS *Scant features, no PC socket*
SUMMARY ***Canon's first sub-£1,000 SLR should be popular, despite scant features***

WDC SCORE **88%** TESTED Dec 2003

£530 Estimated Street Price (£900 RRP) — Sony F828

CCD 8MP
LENS 28-200mm f2-2.8
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/3200
ISO 64,100, 200,400,800
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P, A, S, M, Sc, Mov
FLASH GN not stated
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF, 1.8in
OTHER Audio recording, EXIF, Pictbridge, 58mm filter thread
POWER Info Lithium battery pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 156 x 134 x 91mm

8 Mega Pixels

PROS *Great specification, lovely design, nice lens*
CONS *Purple finging, noise, electronic viewfinder*
SUMMARY ***Lovely, but let down by fringing. With Sony firmware update, could be great***

WDC SCORE **79%** TESTED Mar 2004

£540 Estimated Street Price (£700 RRP) — Olympus E-300

CMOS 8.8MP, 8MP effective
LENS 4/3 Mount Interchangeable
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-400 (plus 800 and 1600)
EXPOSURE MODES P,A,S,M +5 dial scene and 14 Scene
FLASH Pop-up and dedicated hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/ 1.8in
OTHER CF types I & II, RAW mode, PictBridge compatible
POWER 1500mAh Lilon cell
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 146.5 x 85 x 64mm/580g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS *8MP, exposure accuracy, battery life*
CONS *Bulky, slow write times, some artefacting*
SUMMARY ***Design of the 4/3 format SLR may not suit all tastes, but 8MP might***

WDC SCORE **87%** TESTED Mar 2005

£540 Estimated Street Price (£749 RRP) — Canon 350D

CMOS 8.3MP, 8MP effective
LENS Canon EF/EF-S mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-1600
EXPOSURE MODES PASM, A-DEP, Auto, 5 Scene
FLASH Hotshoe, GN 13m (ISO 100)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical, 1.8" 115,000 pixel LCD
OTHER CF I/II, 9 custom functions, USB 2.0, RAW +JPEG
POWER Rechargable Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 126.5 x 94.2 x 64mm/485g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS *Features, fast, performance, image quality*
CONS *LCD , some button placements*
SUMMARY ***Well designed, fast and produces great results, good for semi-pros***

WDC SCORE **90%** TESTED May 2005

£550 Estimated Street Price (£600 RRP) — KonicaMinolta Dynax 5D

CCD 6.3MP, 6.1MP effective
LENS Minolta A mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-3200
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P, A, S, M, Sc
FLASH GN 15m (ISO200), hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical, 2.5in LCD
OTHER CF 1/II, 3 Colour space, Pictbridge, USB2, AntiShake CCD
POWER Rechargeable Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 130.5 x 92.5 x 66.5mm/590g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS *Anti-shake, white balance, ISO range, size*
CONS *Issues with high-contrast scenes in scene modes*
SUMMARY ***A technically advanced but surprisingly simple well-designed camera***

WDC SCORE **89%** TESTED Oct 2005

£570 Estimated Street Price (£700 RRP) — Pentax *ist DS

CMOS 6.31MP, 6.1MP effective
LENS Interchangeable Pentax mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec & Bulb
ISO 200-3200
EXPOSURE MODES PASM +Auto, 6 Scene
FLASH Pop-up and TTL hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/ 2in
OTHER SD, 18 custom functions, depth of field preview
POWER 4xAA rechargeable or 2x CRV3 cells
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 125 x 92.5 x 66mm/505g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS *Excellent image quality for pixel count*
CONS *Few to mention*
SUMMARY ***Small but fully featured, the *ist DS gives great images for the price***

WDC SCORE **88%** TESTED Mar 2005

£580 Estimated Street Price (£800 RRP) — Nikon D70

CMOS 6.1MP (eff)
LENS Nikon F
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/8000sec &Bulb
ISO 200-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, M, SC, +/-2EV
FLASH Pop-up, i-TTL and hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/ 1.8in
OTHER NEF, JPEG, TIFF, PictBridge
POWER Rechargeable Li-Ion or 3CR2
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 140x111x78mm/ 595g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Good price, design and quality
CONS No PC socket, images need some work

WDC SCORE **92%**

SUMMARY ***In many ways a dream camera, not least because of the price***

TESTED May 2004

£580 Estimated Street Price (£700 RRP) — Nikon D70 S

CMOS 6.24MP total, 6.1MP effective
LENS Nikon F mount/1.5x mag
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/8000sec
ISO 200-1600
EXPOSURE MODES PASM +Auto, 6 Scene
FLASH Pop-up and TTL hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR TTL OPT/ 2in
OTHER Custom functions, depth of field preview
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 140 x 111 x 78mm/600g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Speed, handling, image quality, remote control
CONS Occasionally weak yellow and blues, no PC socket

WDC SCORE **90%**

SUMMARY ***Disappointing upgrade, but superb speed, features and images***

TESTED July 2005

£650 Estimated Street Price (£1500 RRP) — Olympus E1

CCD 5.5MP
LENS Interchangeable 4/3 mount
SHUTTER SPEED 60-1/4000sec &Bulb
ISO 100-3200
EXPOSURE MODES P (with program shifts), A, S, M
FLASH No
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical, 1.8in TFT
OTHER RAW PC socket,RAW,CF
POWER Rechargeable Li-Ion (inc)
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 141x104x81mm, 660g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Great image quality, easy to use, versatile
CONS Focusing can be slow, no built in flash

WDC SCORE **93%**

SUMMARY ***The clean images more than make up for the fact that this is only 5MP***

TESTED Dec 2003

£680 Estimated Street Price (£1150 RRP) — Konica Minolta Dynax 7D

CCD 6.1MP eff (6.3MP total)
LENS Minolta A-type bayonet
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000 sec & Bulb
ISO 100-3200
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M
FLASH PC socket/Hotshoe /Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical TTL, 2.5in
OTHER CF, 3FPS, RAW, JPEG, USB 2.0
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 150 x 106 x 77.5mm/760g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Fully featured, build, good images, anti-shake
CONS Too many buttons, harsh noise reduction

WDC SCORE **88%**

SUMMARY ***An excellent first DSLR with great build quality and good results***

TESTED Feb 2005

£800 Estimated Street Price (£1900RRP) — Nikon D100

CCD 6.1MP
LENS MOUNT Nikon AF
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec &Bulb
ISO 200-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M
FLASH GN 11@auto
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical, 1.68in TFT
OTHER 26 custom settings,RAW,CF
POWER Li-ion pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 144x116x80mm

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Colour fidelity, image processing speed
CONS Dark flash exposures, command duplication

WDC SCORE **88%**

SUMMARY ***D100 involves a lot of learning, but it's worth it. Solid handling with great lenses***

TESTED Nov 2002

£800 Estimated Street Price (£1100 RRP) — Sigma SD10

CCD 3.4MPx3Fovean (10.2MP total)
LENS Sigma SA bayonet mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/6000 sec & Bulb
ISO 100,200,400,800, 1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M,
FLASH No
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical TTL, 1.8in
OTHER RAW recording only,CF
POWER 4xAA or 2xCR-V3
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 152 x 120 x 79mm/950g

3 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality, price, lens range
CONS RAW only, software clunky, no PC socket

WDC SCORE **83%**

SUMMARY ***If you can handle the manual processing, it does the job for a good price***

TESTED Jan 2004

£900 Estimated Street Price (£1000 RRP) — Panasonic LC1

CCD 4.92MP (eff)
LENS 28-90mm
SHUTTER SPEED 1/8-1/4000 sec
ISO 100,200,400
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M
FLASH GN 4m @auto/wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF, 2.5in
OTHER SD, RAW, USB 2.0, manual focus
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 82x135x103mm/630g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Handling, LCD, flash, image quality
CONS Limiting ISO, EVF

WDC SCORE **90%**

SUMMARY ***Less bucks than the Leica Digilux 2 for essentially the same camera***

TESTED June 2004

£900 Estimated Street Price (£1270 RRP) — Canon 20D

CMOS 8.2 MP Eff/ 8.5 Total
LENS Canon EOS EF, EF-S
SHUTTER SPEED 30 – 1/8,000sec
ISO 100-3200
EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P,A,S,M, Scenes
FLASH GN 12 @ISO 100
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT/ 1.8in
OTHER CF I/II
POWER Li-ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 44 x 106 x 72 mm/770g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Good image quality, good spec, versatile
CONS Depth of field button awkward, clunky software

WDC SCORE **91%**

SUMMARY ***Simply the best DSLR for the price on the market at the time of testing***

TESTED Dec 2004

£1230 Estimated Street Price (£1300 RRP) — Leica Digilux 2

CCD 4.92MP (eff)
LENS 28-90mm
SHUTTER SPEED 1/8-1/4000sec
ISO 100,200,300
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M
FLASH GN 4m @Auto/wide
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR EVF, 2.5in
OTHER SD, RAW, USB 2.0, Manual focus
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 82x135x103mm, 630g

5 Mega Pixels

PROS Excellent image quality, handling, design
CONS Expensive, low ISO range, EVF may be unpopular

WDC SCORE **89%**

SUMMARY ***A great piece of kit, though I can't help feeling it is overpriced***

TESTED May 2004

£1270 Estimated Street Price (£1600 RRP) — Fujifilm S3 Pro

CCD 6.17 'S', 6.17 'R' MP, 12MP output
LENS Nikon F mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/4000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M
FLASH PC socket, Hotshoe, Built-in
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR OPT, 2in
OTHER CF, xD, 2.5fps, RAW, JPEG, USB2.0, IEEE 1394
POWER 4x AA NiMH batteries, optional AC adaptor
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 47.8 x 135.3 x 78.5mm, 815g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Image quality, ease of use, sensor
CONS Software clunky, slow drive, small buffer

WDC SCORE **85%**

SUMMARY ***It may be a slow operator but image quality is superb***

TESTED Mar 2005

£2000 Estimated Street Price (£2000 RRP) — Epson RD1

CCD 6MP effective
LENS Interchangeable EM mount
SHUTTER SPEED 1-1/2000sec & B
ISO 200-1600
EXPOSURE MODES Manual, Aprture Priority AE
FLASH Hotshoe/ PC (X-sync)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Real size optical/ 2.0" LCD
OTHER SD, optical rangefinder, JPEG, RAW
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 88.5x142x39.5mm/590g

6 Mega Pixels

PROS Build, design, innovative features, RAW plug-in
CONS Vignetting, no PC connection

WDC SCORE **85%**

SUMMARY ***Quirky and fun, the world's first digital rangefinder has some image issues***

TESTED Feb 2005

£2200 Estimated Street Price (£2500 RRP) — Nikon D2Hs

CCD 4MP effective JFET
LENS Nikon fit
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/8000sec & B
ISO 200-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, ±5EV
FLASH Hotshoe
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Real size optical/ 2.5" LCD
OTHER CF, 9fps, RAW, TIFF, JPEG, USB 2.0
POWER Li-Ion
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 158 x 150 x 86 mm/1150g

4 Mega Pixels

PROS Handling, image quality, system support, speed
CONS 4MP may not be enough

WDC SCORE **91%**

SUMMARY ***Fast, fun and furious, however it only has a 4MP CCD***

TESTED Oct 2005

£3050 Estimated Street Price (£3500RRP) — Canon Eos 1D MKII

CCD 8.0MP effective
LENS Canon EOS EF Mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/8000sec
ISO 50-3200
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M ±3EV
FLASH Hotshoe/PC
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR TTL/2.0in LCD
OTHER CF, SD, 8fps over 40 frames,RAW
POWER NiMH
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 156x158x80mm/1220g

8 Mega Pixels

PROS Superb image quality, rapid capture, design
CONS Buggy software, the price

WDC SCORE **92%**

SUMMARY ***A more affordable alternative to the EOS 1D that matches its performance***

TESTED July 2004

£3050 Estimated Street Price (£3500RRP) — Nikon D2X

CMOS 12MP effective
LENS MOUNT Interchangeable Nikon AF
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/8000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-800
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, ±5EV
FLASH Hotshoe/ PC (X-sync)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical/ 2.5" LCD
OTHER CFI/II, JPEG, RAW, TIFF, 5fps over 21 in Jpeg mode
POWER Li-ion EN-EL4
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 157 x 149.5 x 85.5mm/1070g

12 Mega Pixels

PROS Great design, image quality, speed, features
CONS Single card slot, some faint fringing, software

WDC SCORE **95%**

SUMMARY ***Superb handling and packed with features, little to criticise***

TESTED May 2005

£5200 Estimated Street Price (£6000RRP) — Canon Eos 1DS MKII

CMOS 16.7MP effective Full frame
LENS MOUNT Interchangeable EF mount
SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/8000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-1600
EXPOSURE MODES P, A, S, M, ±3EV
FLASH Hotshoe/ PC (X-sync)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Real size optical/ 2.0" LCD
OTHER SD, CFI&II, JPEG, RAW, JPEG+RAW
POWER Ni-MH pack
DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 156 x 158 x 80mm/1215g

16 Mega Pixels

PROS Superb image quality, camera body design
CONS None really, but a larger LCD would be nice

WDC SCORE **96%**

SUMMARY ***Quite simply, as good as it gets. Canon has another scorcher***

TESTED Apr 2005

The TOP printers & paper

Buying a printer? These are our picks. We've listed photo paper too

6"x4" home printer

£150 Street Price — Epson Picturemate

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6 x 4 inch Inkjet/Up to 5760 x 1440dpi
FEATURES Pictbridge compatible, direct printing from memory cards and Bluetooth option with adaptor
SUMMARY *Good colours & sharpness, this compact option is cheap to run, but slow*

WDC SCORE 85% MAR 2005

£150 Street Price — Kodak PrinterDock

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6 x 4 inch dye-sub/ not disclosed
FEATURES Pictbridge compatible, will recharge a Kodak digital camera
SUMMARY *Print quality is good, although not competitive at around 50p a print*

WDC SCORE 85% MAR 2005

£150 Street Price — Canon CP330

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6 x 4 inch dye-sub/300dpi
FEATURES Lithium-ion battery, Pictbridge compatible, range of paper sizes, including sticker prints
SUMMARY *Produces good-quality prints at a reasonable price. Portable, thanks to battery*

WDC SCORE 83% MAR 2005

£170 Street Price — Canon DS700

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6 x 4 inch Inkjet/ up to 4800 x 1200dpi
FEATURES Card slots, Pictbridge compatible, includes infrared remote and uses a TV as a display monitor
SUMMARY *Low profile device that is easy to use with a TV. Print quality is on the warm side*

WDC SCORE 82% MAR 2005

£90 Street Price — Lexmark P315

TYPE & RESOLUTION 4800x1200dpi
FEATURES Pictbridge, card slots for all current media cards, Jpeg only
SUMMARY *Not the fastest or best, but simple inexpensive and serviceable*

WDC SCORE 83% AUG 2005

£180 Street Price — HP 375

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6x4 Inkjet, 4800x1200dpi
FEATURES Bluetooth, LCD, Memory card slots, PictBridge support
SUMMARY *Fast, compact and versatile unit, prints can be grainy*

WDC SCORE 82% MAR 2005

£150 Street Price — Olympus P10

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6 x 4 inch dye-sub/310dpi
FEATURES Uses single ribbon cartridge. Pictbridge compatible, small footprint
SUMMARY *Very fast unit, however it is noisy and print quality is poor*

WDC SCORE 79% MAR 2005

£176 Street Price — Sanyo DVP-P1EX

TYPE & RESOLUTION 6x4in 3 dye-sub/310dpi
FEATURES Dye-sub, integrated card slots, PictBridge support
SUMMARY *Fast, good print quality, small footprint, however, it's noisy*

WDC SCORE 73% FEB 2004

A4 Size home printer

£200 Street Price — Canon iP6000D

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/1200 x 4800 dpi
FEATURES Card slots, Pictbridge compatible, dual paper trays, CDR/DVD printing, infrared wireless port
SUMMARY *Refined and versatile unit producing good quality prints*

WDC SCORE 90% FEB 2005

£170 Street Price — Canon iP5000

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet /2400 x 9600 dpi
FEATURES Pictbridge compatible, dual paper trays, integral duplex unit, CDR/DVD print
SUMMARY *Fast, quiet and produces good photo prints, however it is pricey*

WDC SCORE 88% FEB 2005

£300 Street Price — Epson R800

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/Up to 5760x1440dpi
FEATURES 8 dye-based inks, eight tanks Extended gamut pigment photo inks
SUMMARY *Pleasing print quality and solid build, although it isn't Pictbridge compatible*

WDC SCORE 88% MAR SUPP 2005

£330 Street Price — Canon iP8500

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/4800 x 2400dpi
FEATURES Pictbridge support, dual paper trays, integral duplex unit, CDR/DVD printing, USB 2.0
SUMMARY *A fast device with excellent colour range and sharpness, however it isn't cheap*

WDC SCORE 87% MAR SUPP 2005

£399 Street Price — Olympus P440

RESOLUTION A4 dye-sub/314dpi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT No
FEATURES xD and PCMCIA card slots, colour LCD screen
SUMMARY *As'real' as you can get without having a pro lab in your home. Unit print cost about £2*

WDC SCORE 87% FEB 2004

£100 Street Price — Lexmark P915

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/ 1200 x 4800dpi
FEATURES Long lasting Evercolor ink cartridge, Pictbridge compatible, Memory card slots
SUMMARY *Great value, good fade-resistant photo prints, though could be faster*

WDC SCORE 85% FEB 2005

£85 Street Price — Epson R200

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/Up to 5760x1440dpi
FEATURES 6 dye-based inks, six tanks. Single-colour ink tanks, CD printing
SUMMARY *Remarkable specification for the price*

WDC SCORE 84% FEB 2005

£170 Street Price — HP 8150

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/1200 x 4800dpi
FEATURES Memory card slots, Pictbridge compatible, optional Bluetooth and 10 x 15cm double sided prints
SUMMARY *Range of features, however borderless printing is unsatisfactory*

WDC SCORE 84% FEB 2005

£250 Street Price — HP 8450

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 inkjet/4800 x 1200dpi
FEATURES Pictbridge compatible, Memory card slots, double- sided photo print adaptor
SUMMARY *Relatively good value and easy to use, however it is relatively slow and large*

WDC SCORE 84% MAR SUPP 2005

£249 Street Price — Canon i905D

TYPE & RESOLUTION A4 Inkjet/4800x1200dpi
FEATURES 6 dye-based inks, six tanks Single-colour ink tanks
SUMMARY *Print direct from memory cards or PictBridge cameras, true photo inks*

WDC SCORE 83% JUNE 2004

A3 Size home printer

£500 Street Price — Epson R2400

TYPE & RESOLUTION A3+ Inkjet, 5760x1400 dpi
FEATURES USB 2.0, Firewire, borderless printing possible, roll printing
SUMMARY *Highly recommended. Design is good, but the results are better*

WDC SCORE 93% AUG 2005

£400 Street Price — Epson R1800

TYPE & RESOLUTION A3+ Inkjet 5760x1440 dpi optimised
FEATURES Epson Ultra Chrome Hi-Gloss inks, PictBridge
SUMMARY *A spanking printer with good out-of-the-box colour*

WDC SCORE 87% MAY 2005

£350 Street Price — Epson 1290S

TYPE & RESOLUTION A3+ Inkjet/ 2880 x 720dpi
FEATURES Epson Quick Dry 6 colour inks, panoramic photo formats
SUMMARY *Good tonal range, prints can look a little soft thanks to the low resolution*

WDC SCORE 79% OCT 2003

£280 Street Price — Canon i6500

TYPE & RESOLUTION A3+ Inkjet/2880 x 1200dpi
FEATURES 4 CMYK ink tanks, advanced MicroFine Droplet Technology,
SUMMARY *Very fast and reasonably priced, but picture quality lacks bite*

WDC SCORE 75% OCT 2003

£549 Street Price — Canon i9950

TYPE & RESOLUTION A3+ Inkjet/4800x1200dpi
FEATURES 8 dye-based inks, eight tanks. Single colour ink tanks. Available May 2004
SUMMARY *8-ink ChromaPLUS photo system*

Multi Function all-in-one printer,scanner &copier

£159 Street Price — Epson CX6400

PRINTER A4 Inkjet/ 5760dpi optimised
SCANNER/OTHER 1200x2400/copier
INKS Epson Durabrite pigment inks
SUMMARY *A no-frills unit offering good value and good all round performance*

WDC SCORE 81% SEPT 2004

£299 Street Price — Canon MP730

PRINTER A4 Inkjet/4800x1200dpi
SCANNER/OTHER 1200x2400ppi/copier/fax
INKS 3 colours and black
SUMMARY *Impressive scanning but prints are disappointing. Well specified and good value, though*

WDC SCORE 80% SEPT 2004

£149 Street Price — Canon MP370

PRINTER A4 Inkjet 4800x1200dpi
SCANNER/OTHER 1200x2400ppi/copier/ PictBridge
INKS 3 colours and black
SUMMARY *A great looker and competitively priced but falls short in use. It has got PictBridge, though*

WDC SCORE 78% SEPT 2004

£200 Street Price — Canon MP390

PRINTER A4 Inkjet/4800x1200dpi
SCANNER/OTHER 1200x2400ppi CIS A4 scanner, copier,fax
INKS 4 inks (black pigment, colour dyes) 2 tanks
SUMMARY *With card and camera support this offers photo features along with the office functions*

WDC SCORE 77% JUNE 2004

£130 Street Price — HP PSC1350

PRINTER A4 Inkjet/4800x1200dpi
SCANNER/OTHER 600x2400ppi/copier
INKS 3 colour plus black, optional photo cartidge
SUMMARY *It's a bit loud for the home environment but the scanner is quick with good density*

WDC SCORE 73% SEPT 2004

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Inkjet Paper
A4 Size

£11 Sample Price — **ICI Olmec** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £11 A4 Photo Inkjet Glossy (20 sheets 260gsm) **CONTACT** www.ici-imagedata.com
SUMMARY *Good quality ink-jet photo papers from a trusted brand. A number of own-brand papers appear to share the same manufacturer.*

£7.99 Sample Price — **Jessops** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £7.99 A4 Photo Inkjet Glossy (20 sheets 260gsm) **CONTACT** www.jessops.com
SUMMARY *Competitively priced papers in many finishes. Samples of heavier weight glossy we tested worked very well with most printers and appear the same as Olmec equivalents*

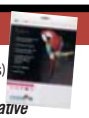
£9.99 Sample Price — **Permajet** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £12.95 A4 Instant Dry Gloss (25 sheets 271gsm) **CONTACT** www.novadarkroom.com
SUMMARY *Permalet papers all resist fading, meaning they are acid-free and incorporate anti-UV. Available in many weights and finishes with the fine-art market in mind.*

£20 Sample Price — **Hahnemühle** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £20 Digital Fine Art Paper A4 Range Pack (sampler of 20 sheets) **CONTACT** www.hahnemuhle.com
SUMMARY *Hahnemuhle has become one of the most respected manufacturers of coated fine-art papers and boards for archival ink-jet printing, including cotton-based 'rag' papers.*

£49.35 Sample Price — **Lyson** A4



SAMPLE PRICE £9.02 A4 Pro Colour Gloss (240gsm 20 sheets) **CONTACT** www.lyson.com
SUMMARY *Lyson has forged a reputation for alternative inks aimed at enthusiasts and pros, and has a range of archival papers in various finishes and weights, including roll paper.*

£20 Sample Price — **St Cuthberts Mill** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £20 A4 Enhanced Velvet (225gsm 25 sheets) **CONTACT** www.inveresk.co.uk/stcuth
SUMMARY *St Cuthberts Mill is home to the famous Somerset fine-art paper ranges of which a selection is available in specially coated form for archival ink-jet use.*

£10 Sample Price — **Jet Tec** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £10 A4 High Quality Photo Glossy Inkjet Paper (20 sheets 272gsm) **CONTACT** www.jettec.co.uk
SUMMARY *Jet Tec is a UK-based manufacturer of third party inks for ink-jet printers. To accompany its inks, Jet Tec markets a range of ink-jet papers including photo-quality papers.*

£15.26 Sample Price — **Tetenal** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £15.26 A4 Photo Glossy (272gsm 20 sheets) **CONTACT** www.tetenal.co.uk
SUMMARY *Tetenal is famous for its darkroom developers, but is also a significant inkjet media player, with its Spectra Jet papers ranging in weight and finish, including an archival glossy paper.*

£8.99 Sample Price — **PC Line** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £8.99 A4 Premium Ink Jet Paper (20 sheets 240gsm (est.)) **CONTACT** www.pcworld.co.uk
SUMMARY *The Dixons Group own-brand ink-jet paper brand. We've tried several samples of PC Line glossy photo paper and the results were poor. It's not that cheap either.*

£49.35 Sample Price — **Innova** A4

SAMPLE PRICE £49.35 A4 Soft-Textured Art Fourdrinier Acid Free (315gsm 50 sheets) **CONTACT** www.innovaart.com
SUMMARY *Aimed at the archival and exhibition markets, with high-tech coated media based on traditional acid-free paper bases. Also available through OEM brands.*

Flatbed
home scanner

£179 Street Price — **Canon** 8400F

RESOLUTION 3200x6400ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Multi-photo scan, USB 2.0, FARE scratch removal
SUMMARY *Very fast and producing good-quality scans*
WDC SCORE **91%** APRIL 2005

£350 Street Price — **Epson** 4990

RESOLUTION 4800x9600 ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Holders for film up to 5x4, Silver Fast AE, PS Elements 2, USB 2, Digital ICE
SUMMARY *Good results and verstatility, but not the cheapest on the block*
WDC SCORE **90%** MAY 2005

£350 Street Price — **Epson** 4870

TYPE & RESOLUTION 4800x9600ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Full-width TPU, 24 film frames, 8 slides capacity, roll film, 5x4in, Digital ICE
SUMMARY *Highest spec consumer scanner yet*
WDC SCORE **90%** AUG 2004

£139 Street Price — **Canon** LIDE 80

TYPE & RESOLUTION 2400x4800ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Single-frame 35mm film scanning, CIS, USB2.0
SUMMARY *Ultra-slim, fast and great results – WDC's Scanner of the Year 2003*
WDC SCORE **90%** AWARDS ISSUE 2003

£129 Street Price — **Epson** 2580

TYPE & RESOLUTION Flatbed, 2400x4800ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES USB 2.0, colour restoration & dust removal
SUMMARY *Well-specified model producing great results for a low price*
WDC SCORE **89%** JAN 2005

£129 Street Price — **Canon** 8000F

TYPE & RESOLUTION 2400x4600ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Scans 12 35mm film frames, FARE dust and scratch removal, USB 2.0
SUMMARY *Good all-rounder, no roll film support*
WDC SCORE **88%** MAR 2003

£200 Street Price — **HP** 5530

TYPE & RESOLUTION 2400x4800ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Automatic postcard print stack and feeder
SUMMARY *6x4in print feeder – unique to HP*
WDC SCORE **87%** AUGUST 2004

£339 Street Price — **Canon** 9950F

TYPE & RESOLUTION Flatbed A4
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Holders up to 5x4, PS Elements 2, USB 2, FARE
SUMMARY *Good image and build quality, but FARE is less effective than Digital ICE*
WDC SCORE **87%** MAY 2005

£116 Street Price — **HP** 4670

TYPE & RESOLUTION 2400x2400ppi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Vertical or flat operation, see-through design
SUMMARY *Beautifully designed, but average scan quality and speed*
WDC SCORE **86%** APRIL 2005

£200 Street Price — **Epson** 4180

TYPE & RESOLUTION 4800dpi x Sub 9600dpi
TRANSPARENCY UNIT Yes
FEATURES Alternate 6 lines colour MatrixCCD
SUMMARY *Versatile unit producing sharp scans, but a little expensive*
WDC SCORE **86%** APRIL 2005

Film
home scanner

£600 Street Price — **Minolta** 5400

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm/5400ppi
FEATURES USB 2.0, Digital ICE4 dust and scratch removal included
SUMMARY *Incredibly high resolution*
WDC SCORE **91%** SEPT 2004

£300 Street Price — **Minolta** Scan Dual IV

TYPE 35mm/APS Film scanner
FEATURES USB 2.0, 3200PPI resolution
SUMMARY *Price, speed and quality make it good for a medium number of scans*
WDC SCORE **90%** AUG 2005

£549 Street Price — **Epson** F-3200

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION Up to 5x4, 3200dpi/6400dpi with micro step
FEATURES USB 2, FireWire, 6X4 print scanning function
SUMMARY *Great for multi format*
WDC SCORE **90%** JUNE 2005

£800 Street Price — **Microtek** 4000TF

RESOLUTION 4000ppi
FILM SIZE 35mm
FEATURES USB, Firewire
SUMMARY *SilverFast Ai Pro 6 software bundled*
WDC SCORE **90%** OCT 2004

£2500 Street Price — **Nikon** LS9000

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm and 6x9cm roll film/4000ppi
FEATURES Digital ICE4/ROC, Firewire
SUMMARY *Multi-format film scanner*
WDC SCORE **89%** AUGUST 2004

£2276 Street Price — **Minolta** Pro

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm, 120/220 roll film up to 6x9cm/4800ppi
FEATURES Ultra SCSI, Firewire, Digital ICE3 dust and scratch removal
SUMMARY *Capable of scanning roll film*
WDC SCORE **88%** JULY 2004

£520 Street Price — **Nikon** Coolscan LS50

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm / 4000ppi
FEATURES USB 2.0, Digital ICE4 dust and scratch removal
SUMMARY *High resolution, fast and easy to use. Also known as the Coolscan V*
WDC SCORE **76%** APRIL 2003

£1099 Street Price — **Nikon** LS5000

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm/4000ppi
FEATURES 48-bit, 16-bit a/d, Digital ICE4 dust and scratch removal, USB 2.0
SUMMARY *Very fast – 20 seconds per frame*

£400 Street Price — **Microtek** 3600

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm/1800ppi
FEATURES USB, 36-bit
SUMMARY *Simple manual feed film scanner for the budget-conscious*

£449 Street Price — **Canon** FS4000US

FILM SIZE & RESOLUTION 35mm, APS/4000dpi
FEATURES APS adapter included, FARE dust and scratch removal, SCSI and USB, accepts strips and slide mounts
SUMMARY *Competitively priced. Includes APS option*

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'I find it hard to look at this picture, partially because it's my family members that are represented in this way, but, also, there is something very disturbing about having a real face on a doll'

The Inspiration

I've been exploring representation of women, families and the ageing process in a number of projects and wanted to create an image that would question how we viewed age and youth. One day I was watching my daughter play with a baby doll and two Barbies in the bath. I wondered why dolls are never of old people.

The Execution

I'd visualised the scene in my head and on paper and sourced the image of my mother lying in bed as a starting point. I then lit and took a photograph of my daughter to match the original image, and positioned the doll so that the face was in roughly the same position. I copied the photograph of my mother's face onto the picture and resized and positioned the image on top of the face of the doll.

I applied a layer mask to the face and painted with a variety of brushes so that it blended with the doll's face. I adjusted the colour, brightness and curves and clipped these onto the face so that I could adjust them to match the skin tone and brightness of the main image. I lightened the hair using the dodge tool, sharpened some of the skin tone on the face, then flattened the image. I used the healing tool, stamp tool and dodge and burn to fine-tune the image, masked the catchlight in the eyes and, finally, added a hint of grain to the overall image to give it a further photo-realistic feel.

Keeping It *Unreal*

Earlier this year specialist photography book publisher Focal Press ran a student digital imaging competition called 'Keeping It Unreal'. Students were invited to submit digitally manipulated images which offered an unexpected vision, one that only digital software could create. The winner was BA(Hons) Photography student Sukey Parnell from Thames Valley University, whose striking and brilliantly executed image, 'Genetic Profile', certainly fits the brief and is more than a little creepy!

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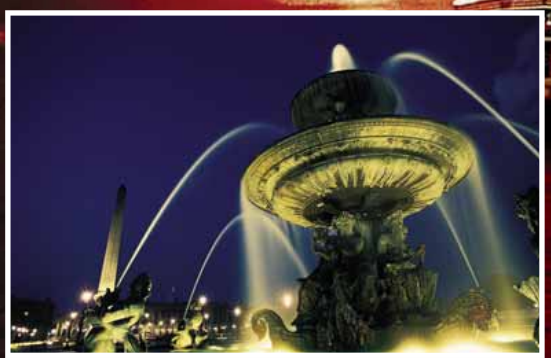

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF LOW LIGHT

Contents

4 Night in the City
Sean McHugh shares his nocturnal shooting tips

6 Trails of Light
Capture vibrant motion streaks of night traffic and at funfairs

8 Fireworks
It's easy to perfect your fireworks technique

10 Interiors
All you need is the available light!

14 High ISO v Long exposure
Which is the lesser evil for creating image noise?

18 Flash technique
Creative options when using flash

21 Using Flash
Choosing a flashgun

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Night *Shift*

When the lights go down, you can create your most striking images. **John Freeman, Sean McHugh, and Philip Andrews** show how

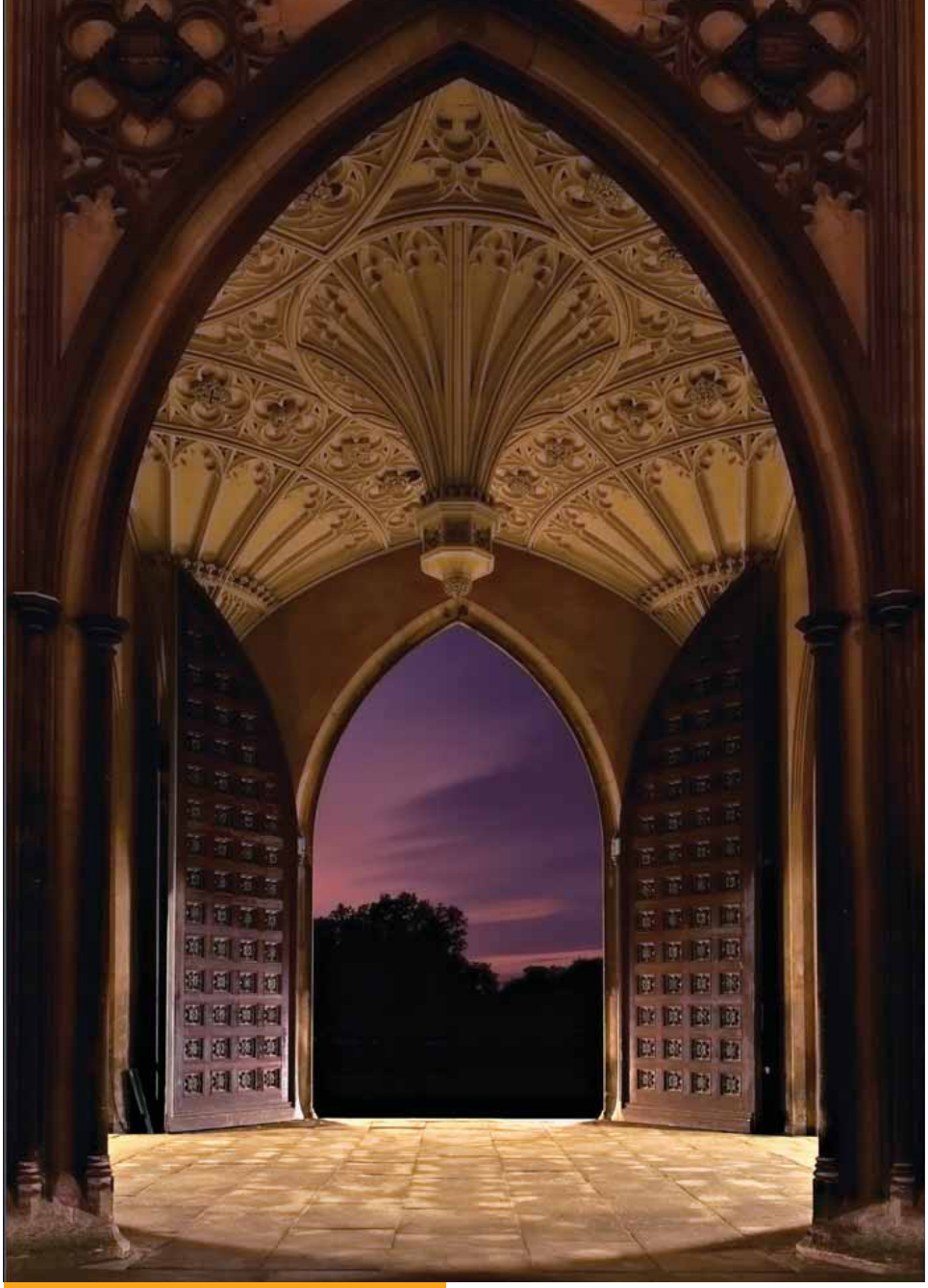
Daylight photography is easy, at the most basic level. Just put the camera on auto, then point and shoot. But when the light fails, things get rather more complicated. This is where you enter the realm of tripods and camera supports, high ISOs, long exposures, image noise, perhaps even (shock, horror) flash. Night and low light photography all seems so intimidating, until you actually try it. Then you realise that it isn't so difficult after all, as long as you follow a few basic rules. Better still, the results can be so beautiful that your family and friends will swoon with amazement at your photographic skills.

Now that the clocks are going back and the nights are drawing in, we thought it would be an ideal time to share a few tips and techniques on the subject, and give you a bit of inspiration. We've got advice on shooting architecture, fireworks, funfairs, traffic trails and lightning, and our resident pro John Freeman passes on some advice on capturing interiors (which you can use at any time of the year). We also explain how to maximise your image quality in low light, and get great shots using your flashgun. Once you've absorbed this guide you'll be taking pictures like those shown here in no time at all. Have fun!

Sean McHugh

Night in the City

Sean McHugh has made it his mission to record the nocturnal beauty of Cambridge. He shares his tips with Nigel Atherton



Above: This shot of the doorway at St John's College is an amalgamation of four shots. 'People kept walking through the doorway so I made four exposures of 20seconds each at f/8 and combined them later using Photoshop.'

When the sun goes down and the light begins to fade, most photographers put away their cameras and head home. But for Sean McHugh, the hours between dusk and dawn hold a special magic, and he can often be found wandering the moonlit streets of Cambridge with his Canon EOS 20D, recording the many splendours of that beautiful city from a nocturnal perspective.

'Photography at night poses a lot of challenges,' enthuses Sean who, as a Cambridge University student working on his Masters, clearly enjoys the mental exercise that this genre provides. 'You need to choose the right time, when there is still some ambient light, otherwise the artificial light becomes too overpowering.'

One of the problems is the contrast between the parts of buildings that are spotlit and those receiving no light at all, which tend to disappear into pitch darkness. 'The best time to shoot is at dusk when the sky is still a dark blue, not black,' explains Sean. 'This not only provides a more interesting sky but the ambient light provides shadow detail.'

In some situations, such as when there's a lot of passing traffic (cars or people) the only time to get a clear shot may be in the small hours. In this case try to choose a night when there is a full moon, as this can provide a surprising amount of fill light. 'People underestimate just how bright a full moon can be,' says Sean. 'It can be strong enough to cast a shadow of me and my tripod on the ground.'

Finding suitable subjects is never a problem in Cambridge, with its spectacular architecture, but there is an assortment of technical hurdles to overcome. Firstly there's the colour balance. At night there may be several types of artificial light in a scene, so choosing the right white balance setting can be an issue. 'I always shoot in RAW mode and adjust the white balance later,' explains Sean. 'It gives me more control. You can never get it completely right using a preset in JPEG mode, and you have limited scope for correction.'

Sean always uses a tripod, sets the lowest ISO setting he can, and stops the lens down to f/8 or f/11 – the optimum position for image sharpness. (Below this, you get a loss of sharpness due to diffraction.) This usually gives him an exposure time of around 20-30 seconds but it depends on the subject, and it can run into the minutes.

'Sometimes I need to use a shorter exposure time, such as when I'm somewhere quite busy and I need to get the shot between passing cars or people. Other times I have to resort to long exposures, but I try to avoid going over a minute or two because then you get fixed-pattern noise appearing in the images. It's impossible to give a precise point at which this happens. It depends on the make and model of the camera, but also on the ambient temperature. When the sensor is warm, noise is more of an issue, so cold British winter nights are better than warm summer ones from a noise point of view.'

Metering can be a challenge too, and Sean takes partial meter readings both from the highlight and shadow areas, then also often brackets his exposures too. In order to even out the contrast problems, Sean sometimes uses a graduated neutral density filter over the lens to tone down the more brightly lit parts of the scene.

Another big problem is the chromatic aberration you get from the high contrast caused by bright, point sources of light against dark backgrounds. This can manifest itself as a halo or a fringe around lights.

'Unfortunately the best cure for this is to use the most expensive lenses,' laments Sean, whose current favourite optic is Canon's 17-40mm. 'That's my workhorse.' Sean plans to upgrade his EOS 20D to Canon's new EOS 5D as soon as he can, as the larger pixels of the full-size sensor will benefit his low-light photography.

Sean aims to get his pictures perfect in camera, so he need do as little to them as possible in Photoshop. 'Obviously I do levels and colour correction but I find that if you're careful when you're shooting you'll have less work to do later.'

• You can view more of Sean's excellent night photography at www.cambridgeincolour.com

5 top tips

1. Shoot at dusk, before the sky turns black, when there's still enough ambient light to fill in the shadows and ensure that the artificial light isn't too overpowering.
2. Shoot in RAW mode. It's almost impossible to exert fine control over the colour with most night-time mixed lighting situations when you shoot jpgs with a preset colour setting.
3. Use the lowest ISO setting you can, but try to keep your exposures under a minute to avoid fixed pattern noise. You can take multiple exposures if necessary and combine them later.
4. To avoid crowds in busy areas shoot late at night, but wait for a full moon, to increase the ambient light level.
5. The optimum apertures are f/8-f/11. At wider apertures the edge definition may not be as good and depth of field inadequate. At smaller ones the resolution declines due to diffraction.

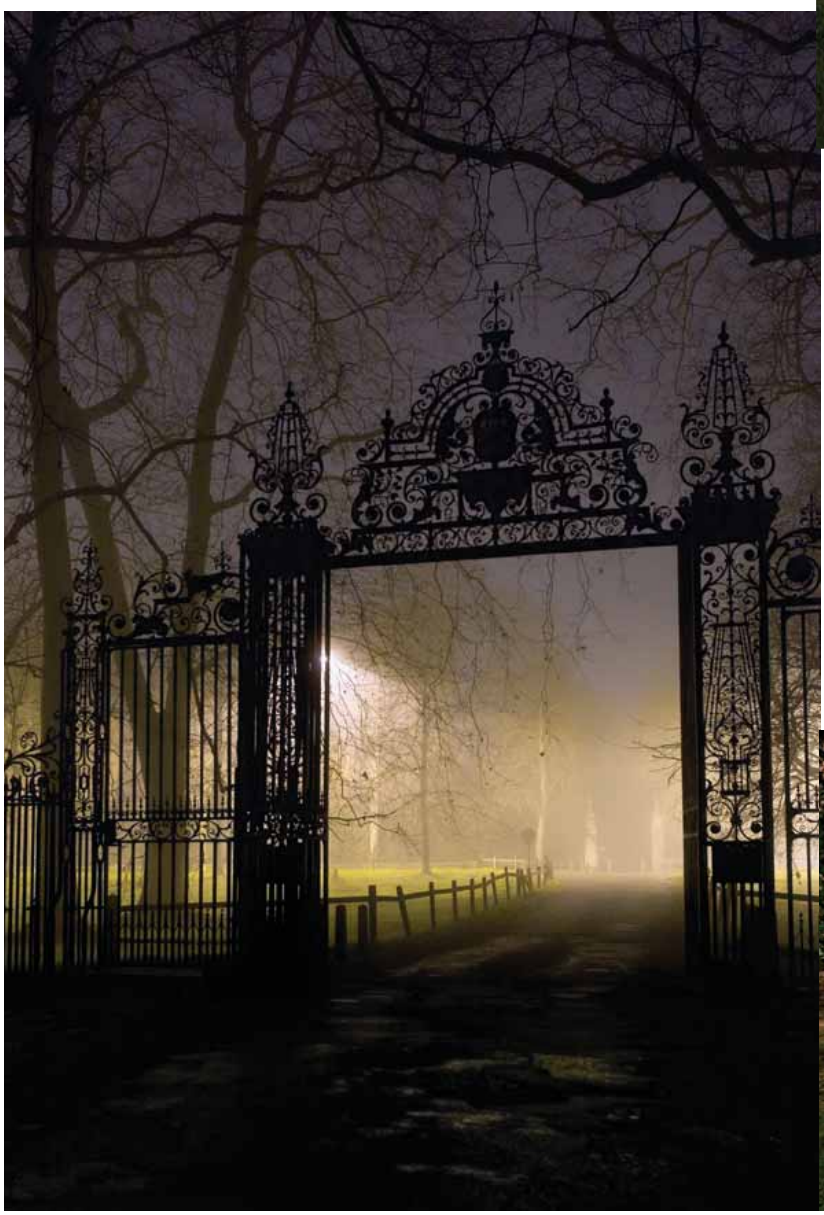
Above: A very atmospheric shot taken near King's College. Sean describes the scene: 'This night we had probably the densest fog I've ever seen, which revealed just a hint of the trees and the pathway. I focused on the street lamp and waited for the passer by. I had to keep the exposure fairly brief so they wouldn't be blurred so used a wider aperture than I would otherwise.'

All images: Sean McHugh

Right: 'Autumn is probably my favourite time of year for photography,' says Sean. 'It had just rained, and I saw the light from the window glistening on the grass. I went to see the guy who lived there that I wanted to take a picture outside his window just to reassure him.'
The terrific depth of field in this shot is the result of careful focusing and the use of a small aperture of f/11.

gearbox

Sean currently uses a Canon EOS 20D ('soon to be upgraded to a 5D!') with a selection of lenses, including the Canon 17-40mm f/4L (his favourite), the 50mm f/1.4 and the 70-200mm f/2.8 IS. 'The 20D is great for long-exposure work,' says Sean, 'as it has very low image noise.'



Left: 'I was passing this gate on the way home after an evening's shooting and almost didn't bother to stop and photograph it,' confesses Sean. 'But I was drawn to the texture of the fog. There was a road beyond the gate with fairly frequent traffic so I had to time the shot carefully and keep the exposure fairly brief. I increased the ISO to 400 and gave it 10 seconds.'

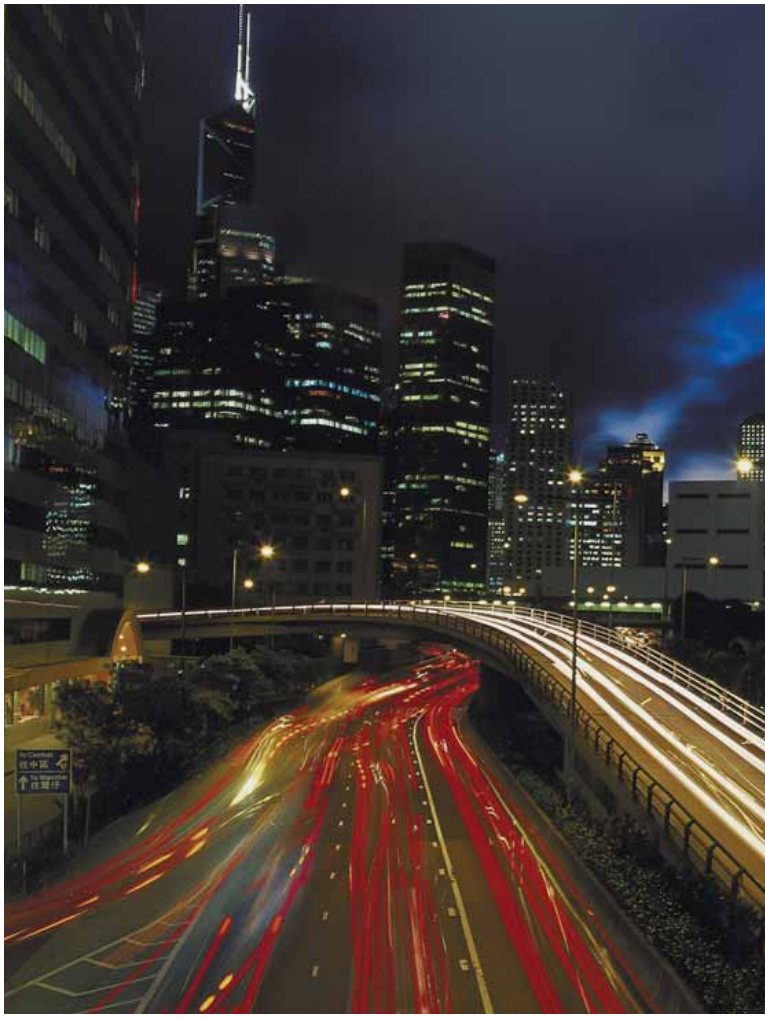
Below: Taken at Bodley's Court, Kings College. 'There were some bright spotlights on the building, but by very careful placement of the camera, I was able to compose the shot so that every one was covered by one of the branches of the tree. A light behind me provided some fill for the bench in the foreground, and I exposed for 20 seconds at f/8, at ISO 100.'

Trails of Light

Lights seem to come alive when they are recorded with a slow shutter speed, **Philip Andrews** explains

For an activity that relies on light for its very existence, it is amazing that so many great photographs can be created after the sun goes down. This issue we are featuring some terrific examples of low light photography along with a bunch of techniques designed to help boost your 'after dark' shooting skills. So as winter draws near don't pack away the camera gear, instead try switching subjects and start to capture those special moments normally missed by 'daylight only' shooters.

Given the long exposures normally associated with low light photography, most photographers have tried their hand at creating an image or two featuring motion streaks. Funfairs also offer a host of opportunities.



Below: With a little imagination and careful composition, bulbs, candles, lazers, fibre optics and neon signs can all become interesting low-light photos. Here, randomly spaced candles recorded with a shallow depth of field produce an interesting design containing both sharp and blurred lights.

Above: Don't think that all the best images are totally in focus. Blurred photos can still communicate the atmosphere or emotion of the scene or indeed how you were feeling at the time that you were taking the picture. Try defocusing the whole frame so that just the glow of the lights themselves shines through.

All images: www.ablestock.com

Left: Set the camera up so that it frames a road or freeway, adjust the aperture to get the best depth of field (ie f/22 or f/32) and then open the shutter for several seconds to capture the lights of the passing cars as streaks. The light trails are caused by the car moving through the picture. Because of the lack of light on the car itself, the body is not recorded, but the head and tail lights are captured by the sensor and their movement causes the light source to be drawn across the frame. Cars going one direction create white or yellow streaks from the headlights, whereas those on the other side of the road generate red trails caused by the car's tail lights.

Above: For motion streaks with a twist: Try turning the low light movement capture technique on its head by shooting from inside a moving car, causing the streetlights to streak rather than the car lights. By taking your camera in the car you can produce light trails from the streetscape as it speeds past your window. Just don't do it while you're driving!

Left: Don't leave your camera at home when next you venture out for an evening at the local funfair. Take advantage of the lights and action by capturing the motion of a well-lit Ferris wheel or carousel. Don't forget to add people into the equation. With subjects such as funfairs they add a sense of scale and texture to the pictures.

Above: Try to capture a Ferris wheel or carousel in motion. By controlling the length of the exposure used for the photograph it is possible to also control the way that moving parts of the scene are captured. Shorter shutter speeds will freeze the motion giving a clearer view of the whole scene, whereas longer exposures will produce streaks for the lights and blurs for the moving people. Experiment with the speeds that you use to create a range of alternative photographs from which you can pick the most dynamic.

Right: Don't forget to try your hand at capturing lightning, nature's own fireworks, the next time you are in the midst of an electrical storm. Though not as predictable as shooting a fireworks show, successfully photographing these spectacular strikes uses all the same principles outlined for fireworks.

Fireworks and Lightning

Capturing those brilliant explosions of light and colour is easier than you think, says **Philip Andrews**

Yes, it's nearly that time of the year again, and if you've spent every other November 5th gawping at the fireworks and thinking, 'One day I'm going to photograph that' then this is the year! And if you can't make Guy Fawkes' Night there's always New Year's Eve, and a host of other events at which fireworks have become a big part.

In between those displays there will be the odd thunderstorm to practice on too, since photographing lightning requires much the same technique.

Digital photographers have a great advantage in that the results of our efforts can be reviewed on the back of the camera, so we can keep shooting till we get it right. But even so, by following a few simple rules you'll get a better success rate and come away with pictures to be proud of.

Above and Opposite: To prepare for shooting, turn off the auto focus and manually focus the lens into the distance. For most situations the 'infinity' setting is fine but check this focus setting with the first couple of photos you take, and adjust if necessary. Next, attach a cable release to the camera or set the shutter speed to 4secs (this can be altered when you review the first shots). Now, open the shutter when next you hear the thump of the mortar and keep the shutter open for the full length of the burst, releasing the button only when the last trails die away. To record multiple bursts, as here, leave the shutter open, but cover the lens with a dark cloth or black cap in between individual explosions.

All images: www.ablestock.com and www.istockphoto.com

6 top tips

1 To ensure that you capture the full effect, use a long exposure. With your camera on a tripod, point it to the general location in the sky where the first few bursts occur.

2 You can zoom right into the sky to fill the frame with fireworks, or pull back and include some foreground to provide a sense of setting. But avoid including complex backgrounds (which will distract) or well-lit structures (which may overexpose given the long exposures).

3 Manually focus the lens and attach a cable release. As a starting point set your f/stop to the following: ISO 50 - f/5.6; ISO 100 - f/8; ISO 200 - f/16. Check your exposures on the LCD at regular intervals. Watch out for overexposure as you'll lose the colour information and won't be able to retrieve it later.

4 Add extra bursts to the same frame by leaving the shutter open, but carefully covering the lens during periods when no shells are being launched. Using a cable or remote release you can keep the shutter open long enough to record the full burst.

5 If you prefer, you can shoot in each burst on separate frames, in the normal way, and combine them into one impressive image later, using Photoshop.

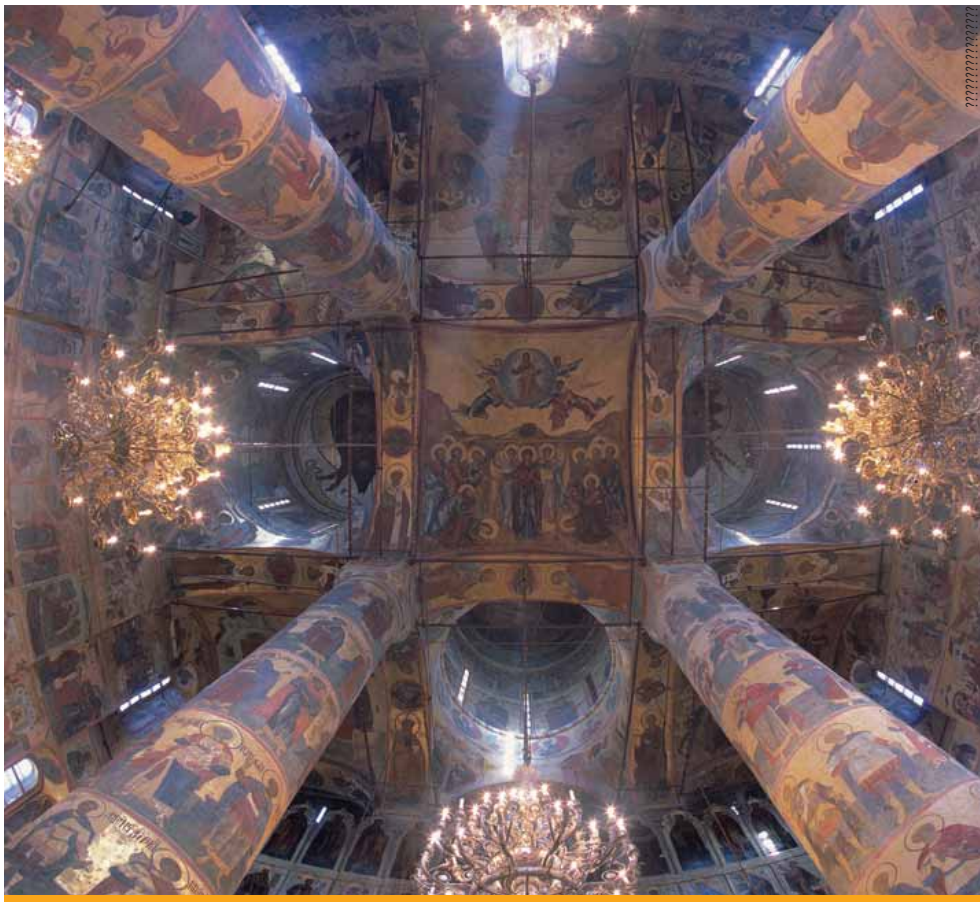
6 Some fireworks shooters colour the light trails by placing coloured gels in front of the camera during the exposure. Alternatively you can change the colour of the fireworks later, by using the Hue slider in Photoshop.

Shooting Interiors

Just how do you go about shooting interiors? **John Freeman** explains that it's not quite as hard as you might think

Many photographers are put off from shooting interiors because they think that it requires a lot of expensive specialist equipment or vast amounts of lighting.

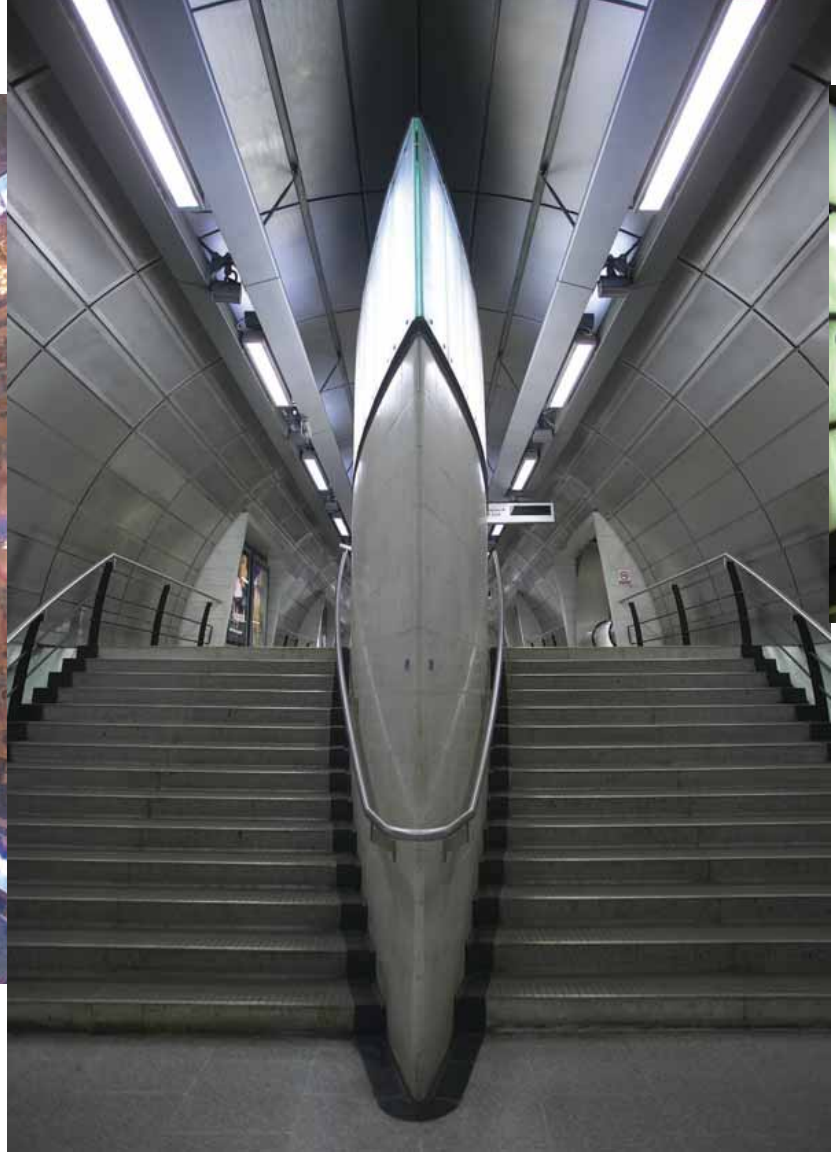
While it is true that certain situations might require more light than what might be available, or that a Shift lens might be desirable to control converging verticals, it is by no means the rule. Nearly all these shots were taken with available light. If there was one piece of equipment that was essential, it was a good tripod. However, even in this case there is an example of a shot taken hand-held. The great thing about digital, when shooting interiors, is that it allows you to review your work as you go. Because of this you can perfect composition, view-point, exposure and colour balance with a far greater accuracy than you could with film.



Above: For this shot, of The Cathedral Of The Assumption, which is in the Kremlin, Moscow, I used a fisheye lens. I had the camera mounted on a tripod and pointed it straight up to the ceiling. I used a spirit-level to make sure that the camera was level in all directions. It is so easy for a shot like this to be ruined if it is not completely symmetrical. Because most of the light was tungsten I set the white balance to this. This has caused some of the daylight to turn slightly blue, but I thought it was the lesser of two evils. If I had exposed for the daylight the chandeliers would have been completely burnt out.

Left: This is another shot taken in Brazil and it is the atrium of a hotel in Brasilia. This city, the capital of Brazil, is renowned for its architecture. The balconies of each floor encircled the foyer and were made of dazzling stainless steel. The architect had designed the glass roof with references to a Zeppelin. I centred the camera and looked up. The roof took on a totally different appearance that could be thought of as resembling a bishop's mitre. The whole shot was lit by daylight and is a good example of an abstract image created out of an interior that most of the guests seemed oblivious to.

Above: Shooting with a 16mm wideangle I took this shot of a theatre interior from the stage. The entire auditorium was lit using just the house lights and I set the camera's white balance to tungsten. It was important to get the correct exposure, as the lights around the balcony could have burnt out completely leaving great white blobs of light. It was essential to use a tripod as the exposure was 15 seconds at f11, with the camera's ISO set to 100.



Left: Usually I never depend on the camera's auto-white balance setting, preferring to set the K function to what I feel is appropriate. I like to think that this gives me greater accuracy as well as control. However, there are situations where it is often not possible to make an accurate calculation of the prevailing lighting conditions. This was such a situation. All the illumination was concealed behind the Perspex wall and although I surmised that it was probably fluorescent I had no means of being certain. In this situation I set the white balance to auto and let the camera do the job. It worked extremely well and the evenness of the overall exposure and colour balance turned out far more accurate and less time consuming than if I had shot it on film.

Above: Normally I wouldn't dream of doing this type of shot without a tripod, but because there is a lot of hassle shooting on the London Underground with one, I decided to try it handheld. The first thing I did was to set the Canon EOS 1DS to the fluorescent mode on the white balance. Then, centring myself as accurately as possible, I framed the shot as symmetrically as I could. This was made easier by having a grid screen fitted to the viewfinder. The vertical and horizontal lines make framing much simpler. Apart from this type of picture I find that the grid screen is a great aid to composition in a wide variety of shooting situations.

All Images: © John Freeman

Right: Sometimes shooting interiors is made complicated by having to balance different light sources. This picture is a good example as there are three different types of lighting to cope with. Tungsten from the chandeliers, daylight from the windows and multiple flash. Having decided that the daylight and the flash (which is daylight balanced) would be the dominant source, I set the white balance to 5,200K and positioned two flash units to the left of the main arch, pointing into the church. These needed to be fired five times at full power. I positioned another to illuminate the main arch that frames the shot. This needed to be fired three times at full power. I then worked out what the exposure was for the ambient daylight and set the lens to this. Having established the f stop and worked out that I needed as many as five flashes, I divided the ambient shutter speed by the equivalent of five and took a multiple exposure shot of five exposures. The result is a perfectly exposed picture.

Left: I was shooting the Hotel Martinez in the South of France when I came across this under-used staircase at the rear of the hotel. Although you could see the balustrades when getting out of the lift it wasn't until you looked down the stairwell that its magnificence was revealed. I worked out that the best time to photograph it with daylight would be at mid-morning. At this time of day, the sun was coming through all the windows on the different floors giving a even illumination. I used a 24mm wideangle lens which enabled me to get in the whole staircase. Although I explored different angles and different lenses it was this combination that I felt gave me the image I wanted.

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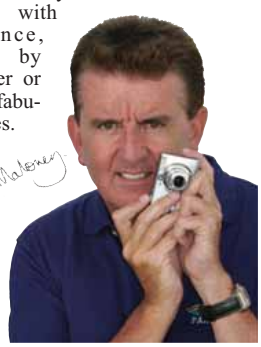

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Right: A useful guideline when photographing floodlit buildings is to work at dusk before the sky turns totally black. The best time is when the overall exposure for ISO 100 is about 1sec at f/8 as this provides a good balance between the brightness of the floodlights and the remaining colour of the sky. The actual exposure used here was 1/20sec at f/5.6, using ISO 800 to avoid excessive blurring of the sea. All photographs (c) Jon Tarrant

Keep the **Noise Down!**

Long exposures and high ISO settings both cause increased image noise, so which is the lesser evil? **Jon Tarrant** looks at the technical considerations for high-quality night photography

One of the strange quirks of photography is the fact that cameras (and photographers) often try to take pictures that look 'normal' regardless of the prevailing lighting conditions. Whereas our eyes see a difference between a cityscape at twilight and the same scene illuminated by the midday sun, camera exposure systems attempt to gather approximately the same amount of light in both cases so that the resulting pictures have a similar overall brightness. This in turn explains why pictures taken under low-light conditions require either a longer exposure time, a wider camera aperture or a higher ISO setting than those taken under full sunlight.

The fact that, for a given ISO sensitivity, either the shutter (exposure time) or the aperture (F-stop) can be used to change the exposure is explained by the reciprocity law. A wider aperture (smaller F-stop number) allows more light through the lens, so a shorter exposure time is sufficient to give the correct level of brightness needed to record a 'normal' image. Conversely, a smaller aperture (larger F-stop number) passes less light through and needs a longer exposure time to accumulate the same amount of light on the sensor.

To be more exact: if the area of the lens aperture is doubled then the exposure time can be halved for the same overall exposure. The fact that the two controls are changed by the same factor (two) but one is increased (multiplied by two) and the other is decreased (divided by two) is what causes exposure to be classed as a reciprocal relationship. If this relationship were to stop working then we would say that the sensor had suffered from reciprocity failure. This is a well-known shortcoming of film, when exposure times rise in excess of between one and 10 seconds, depending on the exact film used. Fortunately this is a much less serious problem with digital sensors – though the associated film problem of colour casts does remain an issue for low-light digital photography.

ISO SETTINGS

All of what has been said so far assumes that the camera's sensitivity to light remains fixed. In practice, and unlike when shooting on film, it is possible to adjust a digital camera's sensitivity (ISO setting) from one picture to the next in order to suit changing light levels. Many compact cameras make

Left: Automatic exposure metering is often fooled by fireworks because the lights are set against a large area of black sky. Over-exposing such pictures is the worst possible situation for low-light photography, as increasing the exposure often means using a higher ISO setting that introduces severe noise, which is very obvious across the black sky. A good starting point is between 1/4sec and 1sec with the lens set to maximum aperture (fireworks do not need great depth-of-field) at ISO 200. Inspect a test picture on the review screen, using a histogram if possible to guard against burn-out in the brightest lights, then adjust camera settings as required. This photograph was taken at 1/2sec using a Ricoh Caplio 400G digital compact.

such adjustments automatically by default but digital SLRs tend to remain on a fixed ISO setting until the sensitivity is changed manually.

Sadly, although it seems appealing to increase the ISO setting as the light level drops, there is a loss of quality associated with higher ISO settings owing to increased noise. Image quality is best at the sensor's natural sensitivity level, which normally corresponds with the camera's lowest ISO setting. Higher levels of sensitivity are provided by amplifying the sensor signal and, although low levels of amplification retain excellent image quality, higher ISO settings can suffer from severe noise that causes a serious drop in image quality. This is the reason why some digital SLRs have their highest sensitivity settings protected by a Custom Function that enables/disables these options to prevent casual use when the resulting noise level might be unacceptable.

EXPOSURE TIME

The same noise problem can also affect images that are taken with longer exposure times. This is not because the sensor generates more noise during long exposures but rather because the signal level is lower (which is why a longer exposure time is needed in the first place). The final image quality depends on the balance between the levels of signal (data from the image-forming light) and noise that can be caused by environmental or electronic factors.

Ironically, it is possible to increase image quality by using very long or repeated exposures in combination with appropriate image-processing software that compensates for the overall effect of random noise, but these techniques are not normally used in everyday photography.

As a result it is necessary to weigh the effect of noise caused by a long exposure time at a low ISO setting versus the noise caused by amplification at a higher ISO setting over a shorter exposure time. Overall, it is better to extend the exposure time than to select a higher ISO setting. Unfortunately this recommendation has to be reassessed against the needs of the subject for a particular exposure time (to avoid blurring) or aperture (to provide sufficient depth-of-field for sharp focusing).

FILE FORMATS

It is usually best, if possible, to capture pictures in raw format so they can be improved at leisure later if necessary. The problem, however, is that the camera's sensitivity (ISO setting) has to be selected before any image can be captured and is also one of the few things that cannot be adjusted post-capture. Choice of sensitivity setting, such as lens aperture and exposure time, is a fundamental decision that has to be made at the picture-taking stage.

The good news, however, is that the raw format remains a useful option when trying to cope with difficult white-balance conditions, which can often arise in low-light photography owing to a mixture of different light sources in the same scene.

If your digital camera lacks a raw format option you should use TIFF format if possible: if only JPEG options are provided then make sure that the smallest amount of compression (largest file size) is used. The problem with JPEG compression is the fact that the algorithm used cannot distinguish between random noise and image-bearing data. What this means is that pictures of exactly the same subject taken using different camera settings can vary in their final JPEG file sizes if the amount of noise in each picture also varies. Or to put it another way, JPEG compression can actually preserve image-degrading noise while at the same time discarding genuine picture information. As a result, one way to decide which camera settings give the best image quality is to shoot a series of pictures of the same subject and determine which setting gives the smallest JPEG file size, as this should correspond with the lowest noise level.

Above and right: Even in the studio it is still possible to encounter low-light situations when attempting, as here, to create dark and moody pictures. These two examples compare the image quality produced a digital SLR (above) with that given by a quality compact (right) under the same conditions. It is clear that, when it comes to low-light photography, a digital SLR can produce significantly better results. All photographs (c) Jon Tarrant.

IMAGE SHARPNESS

There is no point in recording low-noise pictures if the subject is blurred. Although technical testing should be done using a sturdy tripod to guard against this, real-world photography inevitably involves compromises.

There is a general rule that says the longest exposure time that can safely be used with any handheld lens is one-over-the-focal-length-used. This means that a picture taken at 200mm needs an exposure time of at least 1/200sec in order to avoid camera shake. In practice the fact that modern lenses are compact and ergonomic, making them easier to hold steady than were the lenses that were around when this rule was devised, makes this a stiffer rule than it needs to be. As a result you can usually double the safe handheld exposure time, which therefore increases to around 1/100sec for a 200mm lens.

Adding some sort of camera support, whether it is a wall to lean on or

'We need to weigh the effect of noise caused by a long exposure time at a low ISO setting, versus the noise caused by amplification at a higher ISO over a shorter exposure time'

Top 10 Low-Light *Exposure Tactics*

1. Set the exposure time to avoid camera shake (1/30sec or less, subject to the handheld-lens-rule)
2. With non-static scenes, adjust the exposure time to avoid subject blur (1/60sec typically)
3. Use a tripod for static subjects; this allows much longer exposure times without camera shake
4. Set an aperture for sufficient depth-of-field (usually at least f/5.6 or smaller)
5. For very distant subjects the lens can usually be set to maximum aperture
6. Use the lowest ISO consistent with the above requirements (try to avoid high ISO settings)
7. Use raw format if possible, for lossless adjustment of images post-capture, if necessary
8. If raw format is not available, capture images as either TIFFs or lowest-compression JPEGs
9. Consider deliberate underexposure to reduce exposure time and avoid high ISO settings
10. Always test your own equipment – different cameras behave differently!

Above and left: This picture was taken after sunset, using a Fujifilm S3 Pro. The full image shown here was captured at ISO 100 with an exposure of 15secs at f/11. The close-up comparison shows the centre-right part of the picture, compared with the same area from a shot captured at ISO 1600. Though the higher ISO image is not as clean as the ISO 100 image, the noise is less than might have been expected due to Fuji's use of judicious in-camera image optimisation to give more pleasing overall appearance, albeit with some loss of subject detail

Left: Working indoors at the Rodin Museum in Paris, where flash photography is banned, it is necessary to find a compromise between the three crucial settings that determine image quality: ISO, exposure time and lens aperture. Two different compact cameras were used here, resulting in an interesting difference in overall colour balance under the same conditions

a monopod to take the weight of the lens, can allow a further doubling of exposure time. Overall, therefore, a picture could be taken at just 1/50sec even using a 200mm zoom setting, provided that extreme care is taken.

There is, however, a factor that works against all of this – and that is the smaller size of many digital camera sensors compared with film capture. Because the capture size is smaller, the requirement for image sharpness is increased in digital photography if the resulting pictures are to look equally good when viewed at the same final print size. That said, the size disadvantage can often be masked by using judicious digital sharpening (either in-camera or post-capture).

ORDER OF PRIORITIES

The process for choosing the best camera settings is the same for any situation but is crucial in low-light photography because, unlike in most of situations, there is often just one perfect combination.

The first things to consider are the exposure time and depth-of-field needed to get a sharp picture. Most subjects will be free of blur when photographed at anything less than about 1/60sec. It is worth recalling that the earliest mass-market film cameras rarely had exposure times much shorter than this, yet were able to record very good photographs of a wide range of subjects. Similarly, mid-range autofocus lenses will give adequate depth-of-field for most subjects when set to an aperture of F/8 or smaller (higher f-stop numbers). Provided that care is taken, and the subject is at a definite single distance from the camera, an aperture as wide as F/5.6 may well be practical.

Overall, therefore, a good starting point for all low-light photography is to adjust the camera's ISO setting to achieve an exposure of 1/60sec at F/5.6. If the subject is fairly still and (recalling the lens-based camera shake criterion mentioned earlier) you are confident of your ability to hand-hold a camera steady, then the minimum exposure time might fall close to 1/30sec. And if the subject is very distant (making depth-of-field almost irrelevant) then you could set your camera lens to maximum aperture (probably F/4 or F/2.8).

INACCURATE EXPOSURES

It is quite possible that even the most optimistic settings are still not adequate for the prevailing conditions – and resorting to flash exposures would not be possible either. For example, even if you were able to hand-hold a given camera-and-lens combination steady at 1/30sec this would be fairly pointless if your intention were to photograph cars speeding past in the twilight at Le Mans. Likewise, using flash would just result in a mass of specular highlights – assuming that the flashgun had enough power to make much difference in the first place.

One option in this situation is to increase the ISO setting in order to reduce the exposure time, but this risks increased noise levels and also might still not be sufficient to freeze the racing cars. A final tactic is to use deliberate under-exposure, then to lighten the images later using an image-manipulation program. Raw capture is best in this situation as the camera's own software might well provide about two stops of image brightening with negligible loss of image quality. Failing that, brightness and contrast adjustments (or Levels/Curves) are included in Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, GIMP and all the other major image-manipulation programs. You will probably be surprised by how much under-exposure can be acceptable provided you can spend time correcting the images later on an individual basis. **WDC**

Left: The image quality that can be obtained by deliberately under-exposing a low-light image and adjusting the brightness and contrast in an image-manipulation program can be very acceptable provided that this tactic is used with moderation. The main picture here was under-exposed by one stop then corrected with +30 brightness and +24 contrast using Paint Shop Pro. The three sections in the composite image compare the adjusted picture (left) with one taken at a higher ISO (centre) and another taken at the same lower ISO but under brighter original exposure conditions. All pictures of The Merge, photographed at twilight as part of Jersey's annual Rock in the Park concert.

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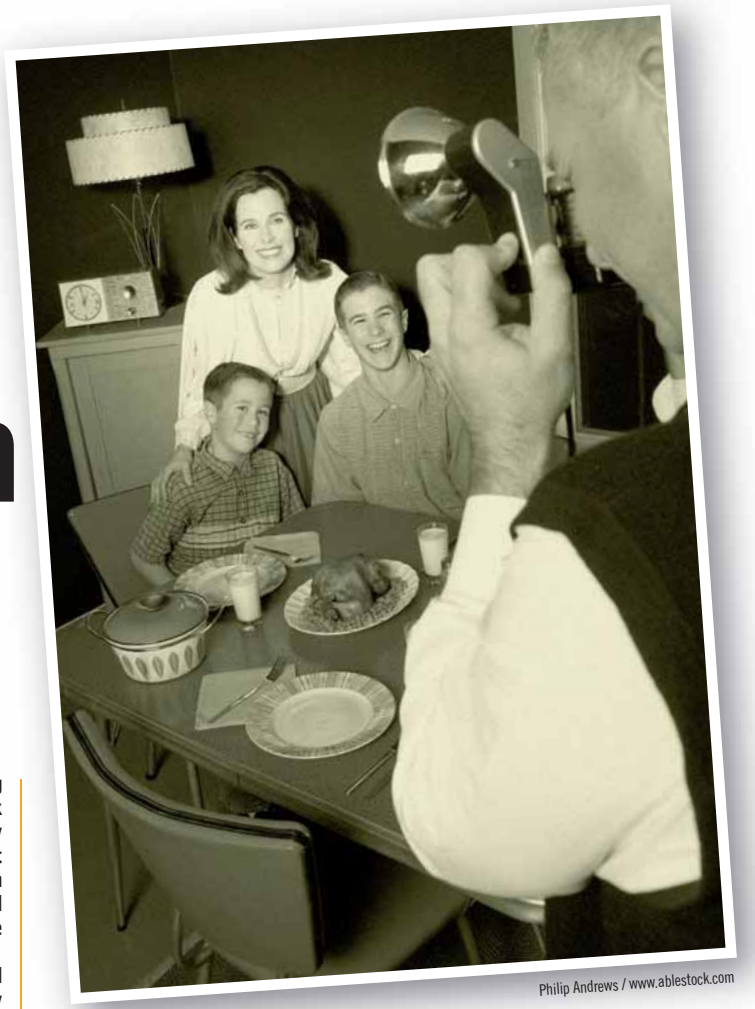
Taming the Portable Sun

Philip Andrews revisits the basics of using flash and talks about some creative options that you might not have considered in the process



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Portable flash is not a new technology. In fact, the idea of using a brilliant light for a short duration to help photograph in dark environments has been around for decades. What is relatively new is that rather than having to buy an extra add-on, most compact cameras and many SLR models come equipped with a small flash already built in. Of course if you want a little more flexibility and power, then attaching a separate flash unit to the hotshoe on the camera is still an option that most dedicated flash shooters prefer.

Flashguns come in a variety of shapes, sizes and prices, but all offer several advantages over built-in units: more power, the ability to use them off the camera (using an appropriate lead or slave trigger) and bounce them from walls and ceilings. Many also boast extras such as second-curtain sync (though a few built-in models can do this) and strobe shooting.

At its most basic a flash unit is designed to produce enough illumination in a scene so that it is possible to photograph successfully in poor light conditions. But just as is the case with other light sources, a good photographer will use flash not only to light the environment but also create a mood or style in their photos. The following topics (and their accompanying pictures) will give you some ideas of what is possible when shooting with the humble flash and a little creativity.

HEAD ON

Most camera users new to the world of photography simply pop-up the built in flash and start to shoot. This approach creates very strong and direct lighting that tends to flatten the 3-D nature of subjects and de-emphasise any texture in the scene. Using direct flash light can also result in large and ugly shadows in the background. But this doesn't always have to be the scenario. Careful composition and the right subject and the harsh light and shadows add to the strength of the photo.

If you have to rely on your built-in flash and don't want sharp, harsh-edged shadows in the background then try these pro's tips:

'A good photographer will use flash not only to light the environment but also to create a mood or style in their photos'

Head on

Philip Andrews / www.ablestock.com

1. move your subject away from the background a couple of metres,
2.try to position background walls so that they are not parallel to the camera, and
3. use the 'Slow Shutter Speed' option (with a tripod) so that the other lights in the room will help to fill in the flash shadow.

WATCH THE SURFACE

Light bounces and reflects off surfaces in much the same way as a ball off a wall. This is the reason why it is easy to end up with a flash burst in photos taken through glass or with the camera pointed directly at a shiny surface. With this in mind, think carefully about what else is in the frame of the photograph you are composing before you push the button. Often we are concentrating on the subject so much that we miss the reflective surface in the background.

Unless you can reposition the subject, yourself or the flash so it is no longer pointed at right angles to the surface, it may be almost impossible to eliminate the flash burst in the photo. In this case you'll need to try another alternative. In the example of the Roman figure (below right), the second image was photographed using the spotlight in the display only. In this instance, turning the flash off was the only way to guarantee that it wasn't going to reflect from the glass case in which the figure was housed.

SOFT DIFFUSED FLASH LIGHT

When flash light is passed through a diffuser or bounced off a white surface before reaching the subject, the quality of the light changes from harsh and direct to soft and subtle. Often referred to as 'window light', this style of lighting can be created by adding a diffuser to the front of the flash or swivelling the head of the flash gun sideways, to bounce off a white reflector, or skywards to bounce off a pale ceiling.

SHUTTER SPEED

When a pop-up flash is activated or top-of-camera model attached, most cameras automatically switch to a set shutter speed that is designed to synchronize with the flash. This is a great safety feature as using a shutter speed that is too fast for the flash can result in under or partially exposed pictures (not that any of us have had any of those!). But one of the side effects of this feature is that most people don't ever change or override the

Fill flash

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Soft diffused flash

Flash

No flash

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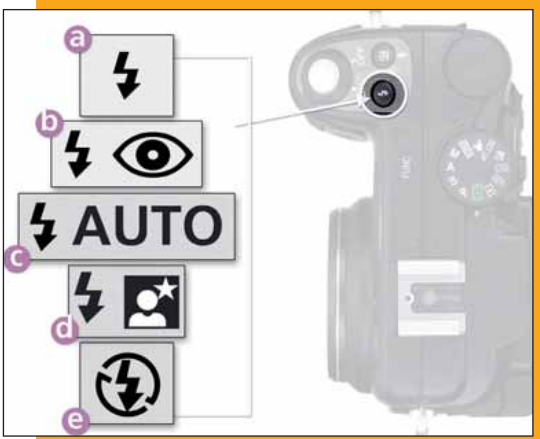
Flash Modes *Explained*



Your camera controls its flash system (either built-in or external) based on the selection you make from the flash modes available. The modes can be set using the button located on your camera body or, with some models, via the flash set-up menu in the camera's main settings. These modes control the way that the flash interacts with your main exposure system as well as with the subject.

(A) FLASH ON OR FILL FLASH – With this setting selected, the flash fires every time a picture is taken. Use this option for filling in shadows when photographing in bright sunlight.

(B) AUTO WITH RED EYE REDUCTION – This option is designed to reduce the red-eye problem you often see in photographs taken with compact cameras. In most models a series of small flashes are fired before the main exposure. This setting is for use when shooting portraits, but rarely works completely.

(C) AUTO – This option automatically fires the flash when it is dark or the light level is low. This setting is the best choice for most shooting circumstances.

(D) SLOW SHUTTER FLASH – This option means that you can combine a long shutter speed with the flash operation. It is best used for night portraits where the flash lights up the person and the long shutter is used to record the night or city lights.

(E) FLASH CANCEL – This option turns the flash off so that it will not fire in any circumstance.

Philip Andrews / www.ablestock.com

to balance with the flash-illuminated subjects in the foreground. Remember to bring your tripod along for these style of photos though, as the shutter duration will generally be measured in seconds not fractions of seconds.

FILL FLASH

This technique can also be used when the sun is shining (yes, you remember). In these circumstances the flash light is used to lighten the deep shadows caused by overhead sun. Very popular with photojournalists from warmer climates, most cameras now have a special 'fill flash' or 'flash on' mode that is perfect for this technique.

FLASH BLUR

Forgotten your tripod? Well, don't let that stop you making some great pictures. Long shutter speeds coupled with a burst of flash can create some interesting compositions as the flash light freezes a portion of the frame and the lengthy exposure adds blur to the photo. With some advanced cameras you can even select at what point in the long exposure that the flash will fire (the 'rear curtain sync' feature usually controls this setting).

FORGET THE RULES AND TRUST YOUR EYE

And finally as a passing tip, forget everything I have written and just have fun being creative with your flash. Some of the most interesting images around break at least some of the rules. For instance, in the example below, direct flash has been used with the flash gun positioned low, so that the light is directed from beneath, causing large shadows on the wall – that's three strikes in most photographers' books, but despite this 'bad' technique an interesting picture prevails. So charge up your batteries, strap on your flash and start shooting. After all part of the joy of shooting digital is that it is easy and cheap to experiment. You can review your efforts immediately on the back of the camera and shooting loads of extra frames incurs no real extra cost.

'Just have fun being creative with your flashgun. Some of the most interesting photographs around break at least some of these rules!'

shutter speed that the camera selects. This results in many flash photos being well exposed in the front of the photo but completely dark in the background (where the flash light cannot reach).

Switching the flash mode to 'Slow shutter' or simply using a longer exposure time can make a drastic difference to how your photos appear. The longer shutter speed gives the background or ambient light a chance to record in the scene and you end up with more detail in the background

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More Than Meets The Eye

The fact that an old flashgun will fit on your brand new digital camera doesn't mean this will be a happy union. **Jon Tarrant** explains what to look out for

New flashguns from the same manufacturer as your camera provide the maximum compatibility. Current third-party models should also work without harming your camera, and some older flashguns, but check before using them, as a mistake could be costly

The burst of light that comes from a modern flashgun happens faster than the human eye can register it. We see the flash thanks to a phenomenon known as persistence of vision, which refers to the fact that the human visual system stores what the eyes see for a short period of time while it processes that information before going on to capture and store its next glimpse of the world.

This is done so quickly that we don't even notice it happening, but the time taken is very slow compared with the 1/20,000sec flash duration of a modern flashgun. Therefore we cannot possibly hope to see what a flashgun is actually doing. Nor do we know what the internal electronics are up to – and this is important because older flashguns and studio flash systems can use higher voltages that might destroy the innards of a digital camera.

HOW IT WORKS

At the heart of every electronic flashgun is a tube that contains a mixture of inert gases: when electricity is passed through the tube the atoms inside it convert electrical energy into light. The amount of electrical energy supplied to the tube determines the amount of light that comes out of the flashgun. The electricity that is turned into light accumulates over an extended period of time as the flashgun recycles, but doesn't get released through the flash-tube until a separate trigger voltage is applied to a small coil wrapped around the outside of the tube.

Different designs of flash-tube suit different triggering voltages, and back in the days of manual cameras – when flash contacts were literally two pieces of metal that touched at the right moment – there were almost no restrictions on what those voltages could be. But in modern cameras flash synchronisation is carried out using electronic switching, and a high trigger voltage could destroy the circuitry inside an unprotected camera.

In 1992 the International Standards Organisation laid down some guidelines for flash design, including a maximum trigger voltage of 24V. Manufacturers generally fell into line and all was well for a while. Then came digital capture and the need to cram even more complicated electronics inside a relatively small casing. Many digital cameras today will support triggering voltages up to 12V but it seems that Canon in particular confines its cameras to just 6V triggering.

»

'In modern cameras flash synchronisation is carried out using electronic switching, and a high trigger voltage could destroy the circuitry inside an unprotected camera'

Right: An inevitable danger when using flash in dimly lit conditions is redeye: this problem occurred here (see close-up) and was solved not by using the camera's anti-redeye function, which would have been ineffective in this situation, but rather by improving the image later using Paint Shop Pro's automatic correction tool.

Note that these figures apply primarily to compacts: it is generally the case (except for Canon) that SLRs can withstand higher triggering voltages – but often still not the 300V upwards that were used in heavy-duty studio flash packs of old. Therefore, it is best to play safe and adopt one of the tactics recommended below rather than simply plugging in any old flash system and hoping for the best.

TRIGGERING COMPATIBILITY

It is a fairly straightforward matter to measure the triggering voltage of a flashgun or studio pack but, owing to the potentially high voltages involved, this process should only be undertaken by a suitably experienced person. The safer bet would be to contact your digital camera's manufacturer and ask what is the maximum safe triggering voltage permitted, then to contact the manufacturers of any flashguns that you have in order to discover what voltages they use. By comparing the various figures you will be able to make a decision about safe compatibility.

Sadly, manufacturers may not have the necessary data as far as older flashguns are concerned and it is here that the internet becomes particularly useful. A particularly impressive compilation of data can be found at http://www.botzilla.com/photo/strobeVolts.html. Remember, however, that you are responsible for your own decisions when you use third-party information like this, whereas you ought to have some come-back if you go direct to the appropriate manufacturers and get what turns out to be incorrect information.

Below: When working in the studio, as here, the safest option is to use a remote flash triggering system: these are available in both infrared and radio versions, both of which have the added advantage of reducing the number of trailing wires that otherwise litter a studio floor

LIVING IN ISOLATION

Suppose that when you check your camera and flashgun voltages you find the latter is higher than the former can tolerate: is the best course of action simply to throw your old flashgun away and buy a new one? The answer may be yes – but that might be more because of the more sophisticated metering performance that a newer model might bring than the fact that there is no other solution. In practice all you need to do is make sure that the flashgun and camera never come into direct electrical contact.

There are two ways in which cameras and flashguns can be isolated. One is via an intermediate physical interface that fits onto the camera hotshoe or socket and has a second connector (either hotshoe or coaxial) for the flashgun. A series of such units, which can transform voltages as high as 400V down to just 6V, is made by Wein and should be available in the UK from retailers such as The Flash Centre (www.theflashcentre.co.uk).

The second type of isolation is achieved by using a flash slave trigger. These are devices that are attached to remote flashguns to fire them at exactly the same moment as the camera triggers its own pop-up flash. These are therefore especially useful with cameras that have integral flashguns but which lack any form of external flash connectors. It may be necessary to juggle the power setting of the external flashgun to match the power expected by the camera from its own built-in flash, but the effect will be considerably greater because a more powerful external flashgun can illuminate further than a small integral flashgun for the same lens aperture.

Such slaves may operate by visible or infrared light or short-range radio signals. The latter two do not need an on-camera flashgun to activate them as they are triggered (at low voltage) using the camera's flash synchronisation circuit via either a hotshoe or coaxial cable connector. These are therefore the ideal choice for triggering studio flash units without having to worry about possible complications caused by light from an integral camera flashgun.

Note, however, that introducing isolation between the camera and the flashgun may result in a loss of some automatic exposure facilities. If this looks like being a problem then the only answers may be to buy a new flashgun that is specifically matched to your own digital camera or to select manual mode exposures.

OPTIMUM EXPOSURE

Back in the early days of electronic flash all exposures were worked out manually using a simple piece of physics known as the inverse square law. This law states that the brightness of illumination falling on a subject at a certain distance from the flashgun is linked directly to the square of that distance. Luckily, calculating the correct exposure was (and still is) much simpler than the inverse square law makes it sound.

All flashguns are rated according to the amount of light that they give out: the rating is called a Guide Number (GN). Often, even today, the guide number forms part of the flashgun's model number. Typical ratings range from about GN12 for an integral camera flashgun to around GN32 for a mid-power hotshoe flashgun up to GN60 for a professional flashgun.

Left: The plants in the foreground of this picture were lit by on-camera flash while the fireworks burned beyond. Automatic exposure worked well here because the fireworks and the camera's flashgun had about the same brightness in this scene. The white balance is less natural but this does not detract from the overall effect of the image

THINKING AHEAD

As well as distance information, modern flashguns base their exposures on a series of pre-flashes that takes place before the image-forming exposure is made. We don't see these multiple bursts because of the persistence of vision effect mentioned earlier, but they do have an important implication for remotely triggered flash units such as studio lights.

The danger here is that the camera's metering pre-flash will trigger the external units leaving them depleted of energy for the main image-forming exposure that follows immediately afterwards. Although there are adaptors that can guard against these problems, the safest bet in these situations may be to switch to manual exposure mode as this is more in keeping with the usual way of working for studio photography.

OTHER OPTIONS

Changing mode opens up other possibilities too, the most important of which is known as slow-synchronisation (slow-sync) flash or 'dragging the shutter'.

Most flash exposures are made using the briefest possible shutter setting to ensure that the image is formed entirely of light that was emitted by the flashgun. This in turn helps prevent blurring, especially now that flash synchronisation times are often as short as 1/200sec. But the disadvantage of a very short shutter time is that distant backgrounds tend to look very black, resulting in the foreground looking like a cut-out. It also means that if the picture you had in mind was of a friend standing in front a floodlit monument the resulting photograph is likely to show nothing of the building behind when a conventional flash exposure is used.

'Suppose you check your camera and flashgun voltages and find the latter is higher than the former can tolerate: is the best course of action simply to throw your old flashgun away?'

To get the correct lens aperture (bearing in mind that the shutter setting is fairly unimportant provided it is set to the appropriate flash synchronisation time) all you need to do is divide the Guide Number by the distance between the flashgun and the subject. The distance must be measured in metres and the resulting aperture will be right only for an ISO 100 sensitivity setting – but it can be adjusted to suit other ISO values simply by closing down one F-stop for each doubling of the ISO setting.

For example, a flashgun with a metric Guide Number of 32 that is used to photograph a group of people stood 4m away will need a lens aperture of f/8 for ISO100. If the camera is in fact set to ISO 200 then the lens must be closed down one F-stop to f/11. The only troublesome bit of this process is the need to know the flash-to-subject distance, but if the flashgun is used on-camera then this is the same as the focused distance of the lens. So by simply reading the lens and doing a quick calculation it is possible to predict the appropriate exposure fairly accurately. This system works so well that it was been resurrected in Nikon's D-series (distance-enabled) lenses and flashguns, which perform precisely this sort of calculation automatically.

Many cameras have a slow-sync mode in their flash menu so it is a simple matter to make the appropriate setting that will give the best results in such situations. You might find that the slow-sync option is called Night mode. You may also find that there is an option to choose between normal or rear-curtain: if there are any moving lights, then rear-curtain is better because the blurring that it allows looks more natural.

Failing all of this, if there is no suitable menu option then choose a manual shutter setting of around 1/30sec (anything much lower will cause too much camera shake, reducing the background to random streaks of light) and see what you get. If you want to be even more creative you can deliberately move the camera during the exposure to get an interesting mixture of sharp and blurred components in the final picture.

As always, the beauty of a digital camera is that you are able to review the picture immediately after capture, then to take a second picture with adjusted settings if necessary to get an even better result.

Left and below: This picture was taken using an on-camera flashgun with its head angled up towards the ceiling in order to give a soft overhead lighting effect. There is a give-away highlight visible in the toddler's eyes (see close-up) that reveals the lighting arrangement used

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